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Mary of Scotland, in Widow's Dress, after the Death of Francis II., King of France

From the painting in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery

[*Frontispiece*

MARY OF SCOTLAND

(1561-1568)

BEING THE TRAGEDY OF THE SEVEN YEARS
OF MARY STUART'S LIFE IN HER
KINGDOM OF SCOTLAND

BY GRANT R. FRANCIS, F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF "SCOTLAND'S ROYAL LINE,"
"OLD ENGLISH DRINKING GLASSES," ETC.

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TO MY FRIEND

H. V. MORTON

AUTHOR OF "IN SEARCH OF SCOTLAND"

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

It was engendered in my mind by the suggestion of the author in his recapitulation (pp. 48-51 "In Search of Scotland") of the problem placed before my readers in a previous book, "Scotland's Royal Line," in 1928, of a story of "substitution" after the birth of James VI.: an old tradition which received much more attention than it deserved.

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† *Plates marked thus are from photographs by F. C. Inglis, Edinburgh.*

FOREWORD

For more than three centuries it was the fashion to condemn Mary of Scotland as a vile woman, a "loose liver," and a "free lover."

John Knox began it in the cause of religion! Her unnatural "natural" brother, Moray, continued it in innuendo, and afterwards, when he was powerful enough to risk the consequences, in veiled charges made in the sole interest of James Stuart, Earl of Moray (and Regent of Scotland after he had successfully deposed his sister and Queen!). Elizabeth of England established it to assuage an irritation, to remove a rival, and to advance an excuse for her own vindictiveness; and a large proportion of mankind ("the mob") adopted the fashion.

Knox and his Calvinists called her "honeypot" and "harlot"—and would have burned her as a sorceress! Moray, his own treason writ large almost from the day she landed in Scotland, dubbed her "traitor" and a menace to the realm—and usurped her power; Elizabeth called her "sweet sister"—and cut off her head! The Edinburgh mobs went further than any of these in loving-kindness, and plainly termed her "murderess" and "whore."

All of the first three, for their own reasons, used their invectives with equal excuse, that is, with none

that would bear examination by an impartial mind, and the unreason of the mob probably exhibited more reason than the rest!

Fond, foolish, pleasure-loving, condescending in her likings to her inferiors, such as Châtelard and Rizzio; reckless where she loved and surrendered to her passion —as witness her marriages to Darnley and Bothwell— if you will, but there never has been any proof, or even any real evidence, of guilty intimacy with any single person.

Bothwell, who both saved and destroyed her, alleged that there was incest between her and her Uncle, the old Cardinal of Lorraine—between the child of fifteen, about to marry the Dauphin of France, and her own mother's brother! Mary merely laughed at the calumny when she heard of it. Bothwell, the reckless borderer, the Queen's "glorious man" of later years, was a known profligate and ruthless scoundrel, and his story is too absurd for credence.

Darnley feigned a similar belief about her to excuse his guilt in the murder of David Rizzio. Darnley, the perjured fool and proven coward, must give some reason for his treacherous act, but who can credit the lie who has ever considered the fact and all that it implies that to Rizzio himself—more than to any other person— Darnley owed his marriage and the throne which he disgraced!

Châtelard? Why yes, Châtelard was Mary's lover it is true—in his mind and intent! Châtelard danced with her in the not too delicate "purpose" dance, wherein he posed in ruff and farthingale, and she in man's trunk-hose and cloak. Châtelard laid his "wifely"

head on her bosom and begged her to kiss "his wife." And she did kiss him—in the sight of all the Court! Not too nice, perhaps—neither were his sonnets to her, nor hers to him, but these were sixteenth-century times and manners, and Châtelard was a Frenchman. Mary had French Court training and tastes, and the masque had its familiarities and its liberties.

Yet when Châtelard, her "husband" in the dance of an hour previously, her sentimental poet and friend for years, and—in his own mind—her lover for long enough, hid himself behind the curtains of the Queen's bed during her disrobing, and only awaited the departure of her maids to share it with her, as he thought, she turned on him like a white and searing flame that revealed him in all his filthiness and vanity. She banished him to France, yet pardoned him later; but when the still infatuated fool repeated his former offence, her righteous indignation knew no bounds, and within two days his head paid the penalty at the Mercat Cross of the presumptuous second crime. Was Châtelard's execution the action of the wanton they would have you believe her?

Who can disregard the convincing nature of her pathetic declaration to Darnley on behalf of the child of whom he had said on his craven flight to Dunbar to save his own worthless hide, "Haste you, in God's name come on; if this baby dies we can have others!" A cheering remark to a delicate woman, made during a headlong gallop a few weeks before his son was born!

Contrast the mother's words to him shortly after the day of that birth: "My Lord, here I protest unto God, and as I shall answer to Him at the great day of

judgment, this is your son and no other man's son; and I am desirous that all here, both ladies and others, bear witness, for he is so much your son that I fear it may be the worse for him hereafter!"

Let Mary Stuart's words speak to-day, and shame any who dare to call them the words of a wanton!

The times were cruder than these more prosaic and possibly more refined days, the language coarser, and the reading—such as there was at the Court—of a nature that would scarcely be considered decent in present-day Society. We read that the *Decameron*, the *Heptameron*, *Le Jardin de Plaisance*, Ronsard, Boccaccio, Rabelais, and Machiavelli, doubtless in all the coarseness of unabridged editions, were the common reading of her ladies to the Queen and her Court as she worked at her embroidery. Was the Court of England and Elizabeth any better?

There was then no thought of shame in calling a spade a spade: Elizabeth was commonly styled "the Bastard of England," in Roman Catholic circles at least, and frequently by Queen Mary herself! The Earl of Moray, the Queen's base-born brother, was the "Bastard of Scotland" or "King Jamie's mischance" to his enemies, and to his friends behind his back; and one only has to remember that Margaret d'Angoulême, Queen of Navarre, the authoress of the *Heptameron*, had been Mary's contemporary, and had only been dead some twelve years, to realise that there was then no thought of indelicacy in such broad language.

If a woman of the known and accepted piety and clean living of Margaret of Navarre could write such tales without rebuke, it is scarcely consistent of posterity

to condemn Mary of Scotland or Elizabeth of England for reading them, or for their freedom of speech.

As early as 1760 Dr Samuel Johnson reviewed a work by William Tytler entitled *Enquiry into the Evidence produced against Mary Queen of Scots*, and although Johnson did not agree with all Tytler's conclusions, he admitted the very strong case for Mary's innocence which the author presented.

This William Tytler was the father of the first Lord Woodhouselee, Judge Advocate of Scotland and Professor of Universal History at the University of Edinburgh. William was thus the first of three generations of famous Scottish historians, for Patrick Fraser-Tytler, who wrote the best and most reliable *History of Scotland* extant, a work which will be often quoted in the following pages, was his grandson.

On the death of William Tytler, his widow passed his papers and manuscripts over to his friend, George Chalmers, who, from this material, and, as he says, after many years of research, in 1818 produced his *Life of Mary*. In this he claims to have "convinced myself that she was a calumniated woman and an injured princess who was innocent of the crimes which were committed by others, and imputed to her by the evil-doers themselves, who found it no hard matter during the delusive circumstances of corrupt times to cast their own guilt upon her conduct."[1]

Chalmers undoubtedly first proved that the *Declaration of French Paris*, so long held to be conclusive proof of Mary's guilt in the actual murder of Darnley, was the personal handiwork of George Buchanan and

[1] Chalmers. *Life of Mary*, Preface, iii.

J. Wood.[1] He avers that "they who were guilty of murder may be easily supposed to be capable of forgery; and they who were detected in one forgery were very probably guilty of similar impostures," and he even goes on to declare categorically that "the Queen's innocence was demonstrated" and therefore that "the Marian controversy here must close." Yet, so far from being closed, it probably raged fiercer in the nineteenth century than ever before, and it required absolute proof of the forgery of the Casket letters, and the masterly exposures by Andrew Lang in his *Mystery of Mary Stuart* in 1901, to still for a time the slanderous tongues of the Queen's traducers. To still, but not to silence them altogether, and signs are not wanting that thoughtless minds do not hesitate even now to pillory Mary Stuart on the lies of George Buchanan, and that arch-plotter and arch-traitor James Stuart, Earl of Moray.

Only a few weeks before the completion of this little task of mine, lunching in a famous restaurant with an English historian of note and discussing the Queen's character, my friend interjected "You will find it a hard task to convince *me*; where did Charles I. get his Italian features from?"

And this after three hundred and fifty years, after all that has been written to show, aye and conclusively to *prove*, the lies and the forgeries that originated in the fertile brain of the "Bastard of Scotland" for a purpose that stands out in crystal clearness in the fierce light of latter-day research.

One more instance — since my text was first

[1] *Life of Mary*, Preface, iii.

completed it has been submitted for opinion to a competent reader, and in an otherwise frank and fair criticism, the merits of which I acknowledge to have led me to alter much of my work, this one passage occurs: "It is clear that the real interest lies in sifting historical evidence, in comparing the statements of chroniclers, and in trying to arrive at the main object—*the whitewashing of the Queen.*"

Mary Stuart needs no whitewashing! She needs understanding and sympathy, compassion in the misfortunes and the fate which befell her, and the common justice which has hitherto been denied her, even by many of her defenders. More even than justice to the Queen herself, what is required most of all is a *just* condemnation of the traitors by whom she was surrounded, from Elizabeth's creatures and spies, to her own brother and countrymen.

Failings she had, of course, as had every human who ever existed, whether King or Queen, Peer or Peasant, and such failings have not, I hope, been overlooked or belittled in the following pages; but if I can succeed in securing for the most maligned woman of modern history, some meed of justice from her thoughtless traducers, my task has been accomplished.

If I have painted the lily too white, or the nightshade too dark a hue, the reader must forgive me if he can—or damn me for a biassed sentimentalist if he must. The truth, at least, holds enough of romance to make excuse for my story.

Whilst this book of mine is actually in the press, another work by Major-General R. H. Mahon, C.B., C.S.I., has made its appearance, unfortunately a

posthumous publication. *The Tragedy of Kirk o'Field* —curiously enough the title I selected for my Chapter XIII—is a masterly exposition of facts as the author saw them, and a very careful summing-up of all the evidences relating to Darnley's murder.

It is curious how trivial incidents such as Darnley's demand for his "great horse" at 5 A.M. have been stressed by this author, as their significance was stressed by me, and General Mahon has advanced what is an entirely new theory, the ingenuity of which I can and do acknowledge, even if I cannot yet accept it in its entirety — that is, that the murder was not the result of any plot to murder Darnley at all, but was a "counter-Reformation" plot having for its object the removal of the Queen, and the substitution of the ultra-Catholic Darnley as King-Regnant.

General Mahon has reached the same conclusion as that to which I had already come, by a totally different route, namely that the Queen had no part or lot in the murder of Henry Darnley at all. He goes further than I do in considering that Bothwell was also innocent, and that Darnley's murder was the result of fortuitous circumstances by unknown Scottish Protestant nobles.

I can, however, confidently recommend this thoughtful and clever work to those students of Marian history who may be interested in considering an entirely new problem of the tragic happenings on the night of 9th-10th February 1567, for his conclusions and theories merit and demand careful and impartial consideration.

My grateful thanks are due to many enthusiastic friends who have assisted and encouraged my work, and especially to:—H.M. The King for gracious permission to reproduce the portraits of James Stuart, Earl of Moray, at Holyrood Palace, and of Henry Lord Darnley at Windsor; to the Earl of Lauderdale for similar permission in the case of the portrait of William Maitland of Lethington at Thirlestane Castle, Lauder; to Mr J. L. Caw for his material assistance in the selection of these and the portraits in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery; to Sir George Macpherson-Grant for the loan of his interesting print of the surrender of Queen Mary at Carberry Hill; to Dr G. C. Williamson for bringing to my notice the little-known miniature of Queen Mary (Plate IX.), once in the collection of King Charles I., and bearing the usual royal brand C. R. on frame and back. Special permission to reproduce this charming portrait is accorded by Dr Williamson under powers vested in him by the late Mr J. Pierpont Morgan, in whose splendid collection the miniature is now included; and to Francis Grant, Esq., Lyon King of Arms, for his valuable suggestion to use the hitherto unpublished illustration of the Arms of Mary Queen of Scots and those of her husband, Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley, from the "Workman MS.," and the Great Seal of Mary Stuart in the Register House of the Lyon Office in Edinburgh.

Mr Francis Caird Inglis, photographer to the King in Edinburgh, has afforded me valuable assistance in his reproduction of these unique illustrations, and is the owner of the copyright of the pictures of the Royal

rooms at Holyrood and Edinburgh Castle, and of the print of John Knox.

Messrs T. & R. Annan of Glasgow are the owners of the copyright of the portraits from the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

MARY OF SCOTLAND

(1561-1568)

CHAPTER I

HOMECOMING OF THE QUEEN

Francis II., King of France, died on 5th December 1560, and his young widow, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland for all the eighteen years of her life, and Queen of France for a short eighteen months prior to the death of her boy-husband, sailed for Scotland on 25th July 1561.

Since the days when, as a beautiful child of six, Mary had left the land of her birth as the destined bride of the then Dauphin of France, a vast and almost inexplicable change had passed through the minds and consciences of her Scottish subjects. The Reformed religion had made rapid headway in Scotland, and Catholicism had become a by-word under the discipline of Calvin and the thundering oratory of John Knox.

The Queen's two immediate predecessors, James IV. and V., had very largely contributed to this, by their shameful practices in "filling the highest offices of the Scotian Church with their bastard children, which

degraded the ecclesiastical dignities,"[1] and the people, not unnaturally, declined to recognise any spiritual superiority in such unsuitable "ecclesiastics." The three base-born sons of Queen Mary's father, James V., are particularly glaring instances. Lord Robert Stuart was appointed Prior of Holyrood Abbey, Lord John Stuart Commendator of Coldingham, and Lord James Stuart, whilst yet a boy, received the rich Priory of St Andrews, and at the age of seventeen he accompanied his young sister to the Court of France "with a numerous attendance of writers, statesmen, and warriors."[2]

By 1552 therefore the schism was complete. The old faith had as its head the base-born Archbishop Hamilton, whilst the Reformed religion owned John Knox and the young Prior of St Andrews, Lord James Stuart, then only twenty-one, for its leaders against the established order.

Prior to the departure of the Queen from France, this crafty statesman, the Lord James, had been sent to summons her to her Scottish throne and, it is said,[3] he was admonished not to consent that she should celebrate the Mass on her return to her native land. Camden has stated that he returned thither by way of London, and gave private advice to Queen Elizabeth to have Mary intercepted on her passage home, and that "Liddington" (William Maitland, the younger, of Lethington, late secretary to the recently deceased Queen Regent of Scotland, Mary of Guise), in a letter to Cecil dated 10th August 1561, gave similar advice.

[1] Chalmers. *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 18.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 10. [3] *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 39.

So early, therefore, we see the beginning of the young Queen's troubles, and their reason. Chalmers[1] states that "the fact is incontrovertible, Lord James and his faction had an interest in what they recommended; for if she had been intercepted, Lord James would have reigned in Scotland."

She was not intercepted, though the attempt was made[2] and a ship with some of her baggage was captured and taken to London. So on 19th August 1561 a cheerless Scots dawn, after a night of chill fog, saw a dour scene of welcome, by a muddy shore. A few gay banners, some brightly caparisoned horses and palfreys, and a small assemblage of curious people on the shore of Leith—that was all.

Mary Stuart was only nineteen years of age when she faced her unknown subjects for the first time, and she made a winsome, yet regal figure, as she gazed down from the vantage point of the ship, where it towered above the quayside. Garbed in her widow's dress of white, surrounded by her ladies and a number of French courtiers, her youthfulness and her fragility sent something like a thrill of emotion and loyalty through the dour congregational Scots, who had come, partly out of curiosity, partly in hope and partly in fear of the unknown "Papist Queen," now returning to her native land after an absence of twelve years, to sway the sceptre which had so recently fallen from the dying fingers of her mother, Mary of Guise.

Great names and historic figures accompanied or met the Queen of Scots at Leith. The Duc d'Aumale,

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 44, note *r*.
[2] Strickland. *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., pp. 75-80.

her uncle, the Duke of Châtelherault, her cousin, who in his own country of Scotland was Earl of Arran and head of the powerful Hamilton clan, a whole bevy of her French cousins of the princely house of Guise, the Earls of Huntly, Atholl and Argyll, her base-born brothers, Lord Robert, Lord John and Lord James Stuart, the Marquis d'Elbœuf, Monsieur de Châtelard a French poet with a tragic fate before him, her confessor, and others of lesser note; a brave entourage for the girl-Queen.

In spite of her faith, the hopes of the people of Scotland were centred on the home-coming of the girl so recently widowed. By the Treaty of Edinburgh, on 11th June 1560 Mary's councillors had agreed in her absence, not only to recognise Elizabeth's right to the title of Queen of France, in spite of the Salic Law, and the fact that Mary was, at that time, the reigning Queen-Consort of that country, but committed her to an agreement that "the King and Queen of France should *in all times coming* abstain from using and bearing the arms and titles of the Kingdoms of England and Ireland," thus requiring her to abandon any claim to the succession to those crowns and titles, to which she was heir-presumptive on the death of Queen Elizabeth."[1]

Mary had refused to ratify this iniquitous treaty, and her recent statesmanlike treatment of the English Ambassador, Throckmorton, on that occasion, had gone straight to the hearts of the sturdy Scots, brought up as they were in the belief that England and the English were their inveterate enemies, and to them the

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 33.

defence of their Queen had savoured of the courage of the long line of her ancestors, the Royal Stuarts.

Surely never a more beautiful Princess had reached the shores of Scotland! From the delightful chalk drawing of the young Queen which is still in the possession of the French Government in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, we gain a clear idea of her appearance at this critical period of her life.

The forehead was high and broad, the nose rather long, the iris of the long and langorous eyes of a yellowish hazel, flecked with sepia, and with a sidelong trick of looking that was disconcerting and alluring; the eyebrows were of a darker shade of brown, faint and delicately pencilled; a sweet-tempered mouth, with full, amorous and very red lips, of which the upper projected very slightly, above a round, full chin; the hair, almost exactly matching the eyes in colour, was a warm yellowish-brown, with sepia shades, fairer at the sides, and was crimped with little bunches of curls under the white widow's coif, which added to the witchery of her beauty.

Of the French national widow's dress, the "deuil blanc," we have a good idea from several portraits of Mary Stuart which still remain to us. The wired cap fitted closely round the head, upon which it was pressed down in the centre, leaving space above the ears to exhibit the little bunches of fair curls; and a narrow, frilled lace-edging to the cap gave an added youthfulness to the wearer.

The undergarment of the costume was dark in colour, and cut low enough to reveal the cleft between the girlish breasts, but it was covered with a semi-

transparent white gauze veil, completely covering the body, and fitting tightly right round the neck, with pleated folds falling from the chin in front.

In this guise Mary Stuart passed from the galley which had brought her from France—from that country of her adoption and of her happiest years, which she had so pathetically addressed as its shores faded from her sight that August dawn, nearly four hundred years ago, "Farewell France, my beloved France, I shall never see thee more!"

The procession to her Palace of Holyrood was so meagre in comparison with the stately pageants to which she had become accustomed in her journeyings as "Queen of France," that she could not repress a sigh at the thought of the lost joyousness of her recent life, and of the stern realities which faced her in the bleak northern land, riven from end to end by opposing religious factions and antagonistic to her own beliefs, over which she had thenceforth to rule.

Arrived at Holyrood-house gloomy and sinister under the frowning shadow of Arthur's Seat, Mary pleaded her fatigue, and sought the privacy of her own apartments, where, shutting herself from all affairs of State, and attended only by her "Maries," she remained in seclusion for some days.

She had stipulated with her natural brother, the Lord James, for free exercise of her own form of worship, and he, Protestant as he was, had maintained in defiance of Knox and his co-Reformers, that it was impossible to deny this liberty to their Sovereign and liege-lady. Notwithstanding this, Knox, ever intolerant, had determined to resist the "idolatry of the Mass," even

when celebrated in private by the Queen to whom he had sworn allegiance under this very condition. "We would rather have," said he, "ten thousand French soldiers landed in Scotland, than permit one single Mass to be sung."

To this bigoted zealot word was brought by the Master of Lindsay—equally irreconcilable in his religious views—that a Mass was to be celebrated in the Queen's private Chapel on the morning of the Sunday following Mary's return, and the two Reformers, Knox in his Geneva bands and Lindsay in full armour and accompanied by his followers, forced their way into the courtyard of the Palace, demanding that the officiating chaplains should be handed over to them for instant execution on the charge of "idolatry."

For once calling upon his better nature and his allegiance, the Lord James with his brothers Lord Robert and Lord John Stuart, the first with his visor down and his sword drawn, stood in the entrance of the Chapel, and by his determination and martial appearance overawed the Reforming faction. Knox was furious, and bitterly upbraided Lord James for his countenance and support of the "Papist woman."

So early was the young Queen made to see the trials she had to face, and the bitter antagonism which was in store for her. The blood of the Bruce, and the long line of the Stuart Kings did not, however, run in Mary Stuart's veins for nothing, and a gentleman-in-waiting, with some trepidation, took advantage of the first lull in the tumult to convey the Queen's command to her brother, that Knox should be brought before her immediately.

Fearless as he was, John Knox knew better than to ignore such a command, and so provoke his own arrest, and he accompanied Lord James to the presence.

Mary was seated in her chair of state, under the multicoloured great window of the Council Chamber, and exhibited a sweet dignity and a stern displeasure which brought out all her majesty and her charm.

"So, Master Knox," she began, "is this the welcome and the loyalty which the Queen of Scots is to look for from her subjects? Is this the way the Ministers of the Reformed religion keep their plighted word to the Sovereign to whom they have sworn allegiance? How are we to look for obedience from our subjects, when their Pastors incite them to rise against their anointed Prince? From you, Master Knox, we expected better things!"

"Madam," he replied,[1] "if to rebuke idolatry, and to do my endeavours to persuade the people to worship God according to His word, is to raise your subjects against their Ruler, I may not stand excused, for so I have acted, but if a true knowledge of God and right worship lead all good subjects—as they assuredly do—to obey their Prince from their heart, who, then, Madam, can reprehend me? If all men in the days of the Holy Apostles should have been compelled to follow the religion of the Roman Emperors, where could have been the Christian Faith? Daniel and his fellows were subjects of Nebuchadnezzar, and yet refused to be of his religion!"

"Yea," answered the Queen, "but these men did not resist."

"And yet," replied Knox, no whit abashed, "they who obey not the Prince's command may virtually be said to resist!"

[1] Knox's *History of the Reformation*, pp. 106 *et seq.*

John Knox, the Scottish Reformer

From a print in the collection of Mr F. C. Inglis, Edinburgh

[*Face p.* 8

The Queen, anxious to placate even so implacable an opponent, smiled sweetly and sadly.

"Nay, Master Knox," said she, "but they did not resist with the sword!"

"Madam," was the ready answer, "that was simply because they had not the power to do so."

Mary started and bit her lip, controlling her emotion and anger with difficulty.

"What!" she cried, speaking in a quivering voice, "do you dare to maintain that subjects, having the power, may resist their Princes?"

"Most assuredly," was the reply, "if the Princes exceed their bounds. God hath nowhere commanded that higher reverence shall be given to Kings by their subjects than to parents by their children, and yet if a parent be struck with madness and attempt to slay his child, he may lawfully bind and disarm him until the madness may be overpast. It is even so, Madam, with Princes that would murder the children of God who may be their subjects. Blind zeal is nothing but a mad frenzy, and so to take the power from them, to bind their hands, yea, and to cast them into prison until they be brought to a more sober mind, is no disobedience against Princes, but just obedience because it agreeth with the word of God."

Amazed, incredulous at such great daring, almost terrified at the menace of his words, Mary gazed at the Reformer with a look of horror in her eyes. She thought of her sheltered and honoured past life, of her fragility and her youth. Small wonder is it if this first example of the fierceness and bigotry of the Reformers whom she had to face and rule in this rude kingdom of

her ancestors, caused her dignity to break, and her womanhood to assert itself, and turning to her brother, she burst into tears.

Lord James Stuart, in these early days of his sister's return, Protestant as he was, essayed the brother's part, and lovingly soothed and calmed the girl's feelings, for, be it remembered, although widowed and a Queen, Mary Stuart was little more than a child, not yet out of her teens. She resumed the debate with some bitterness, telling Knox that it would appear from his arguments that her subjects must obey him and not her, and that it would appear that she, the Queen, must be subject to her people, and not the people to herself!

To this Knox demurred, with the remark that his desire was that both Prince and people should obey the word of God, and that it was the Queen's duty to defend the Church.

Mary's answer to this stern exhortation was characteristic of her whole life, and, with a fatality which she could not foresee, was couched in almost the very words she was to use to the Dean of Peterborough on the scaffold at Fotheringay twenty-five years later, when she was to offer up that life in defence of the Church and the faith that meant so much to her.[1]

"Yea," she answered him, "it is indeed true, but yours is not the Church that I will nourish. I will defend the Church of Rome, for I think that it is the true Church of God."

At this forceful expression of her faith, Knox flew

[1] *Scotland's Royal Line*, pp. 45-50, where a contemporary account, written by an eye-witness, of her execution and of all the speeches delivered on that occasion, is given *in extenso*.

into a violent rage, and answered in words which evinced the stern and bitter bigotry and intolerance of the times and the man :

"That, Madam, is not reason, neither will your defence make the harlot of Rome to be the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ. Wonder not, Madam, that I call Rome an harlot, for she is tainted and altogether polluted with every kind of spiritual abomination as much in doctrine as in manners. Yea, Madam, I undertake myself to prove that the Church of the Jews which crucified Jesus Christ was not so far degenerated from the ordinances and statutes which God gave unto Moses and Aaron, as the Church of Rome is declined, and for more than five hundred years has degenerated from that purity of religion which was taught by the Apostles."

The Reformer continued in this strain for what seemed an interminable period, until at last, weary of his importunities and his intolerance, Mary dismissed him with the sweet dignity and steadfast determination to uphold the faith in which she believed, which was never to falter in all the weary years to come.

A week after her conversation with John Knox, Mary passed in state from Holyrood-house to the Castle of Edinburgh, where a public banquet was arranged by the chief citizens to do honour to the young Queen and her relatives, and to the French nobles who had accompanied her to Scotland and were now about to return to France.

It was a great occasion, and a magnificent if somewhat barbaric progress in which she now took part. Mounting her white palfrey, with its gorgeous trappings of crimson and gold, she rode under a crimson canopy

embroidered in gold with the unicorns of Scotland alternating with the lilies of France. On her right hand rode her natural brother, the Lord James Stuart, with whom Mary was now on the most tender and affectionate terms; on her left hand was William Maitland of Lethington, a seemingly honest friend and hitherto her mother's devoted adherent for many years during her Regency, whom Mary now made Secretary of State. Behind her rode her Maries and other ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting; and surrounding and following the canopy, which was carried by twelve of the chief citizens of Edinburgh, came a long train of Nobles and Knights of France, in full armour, with their cognizances displayed on their horse's caparisons or on their surcoats.

At the West Portal of Edinburgh the procession was met by four negro slaves, gorgeously apparelled, two in white velvet slashed with crimson, and two in crimson slashed with white, all four wearing jewelled hats with white ostrich plumes. On the way up the Castle Wynd, some of the Reforming faction had staged a pageant in which it was intended to portray an indecent parody of the Mass, to be followed by the burning of an effigy supposed to represent the officiating priest; but word being brought to the Earl of Huntly, an ardent Catholic who rode in the Queen's bodyguard, he put spurs to his horse with his family cry "Aboyne! Watch for the Gordon!" and with the aid of his three tall sons and his followers scattered the mummers ere they could offend the senses of their Sovereign by the proposed travesty of her faith.

Otherwise Mary's procession through her capital

was a triumphal progress, and she was hailed with joy by her people on all hands. White kerchiefs waved from every window, flowers were strewn in her path, and at the banquet which followed she was toasted, fêted, and honoured by all and sundry of the burgesses of Edinburgh, and the nobility of Scotland. Knox and Lindsay of the Reforming party alone held aloof from the general rejoicing, and it looked indeed as if the sun shone fair on the commencement of Mary Stuart's reign over her fellow-countrymen and her ancient kingdom of Scotland.

But already the first muttering of the distant storm was in her ears. She could not forget the threats and warnings which had been uttered by Knox and, gentle and sweet as was her demeanour in the procession and at the State banquet, she was unable to banish entirely the forebodings which the scenes and discussion of the previous Sunday had left in her mind.

She determined to do her utmost to conciliate the Protestant faction, and to that end she sent her Secretary, Lethington, on a mission to the English Court to express to Queen Elizabeth her ardent wish for her friendship and forgiveness for the apparent slight of which she had been guilty "at the instance of her relations in France, the Guises," in claiming to be the only legitimate Queen of England. She withdrew her claim to the English crown, but asked to be recognised as Elizabeth's successor if "her good cousin and sister" intended to persist in her desire "to live and die a virgin Queen."

Mary, in pursuit of this policy of conciliation, gave countenance and support to the Reformers, and the

Romanists found themselves far less powerful and more neglected than they considered they had a right to expect. She was undoubtedly much influenced by the Protestant opinions of her brother, James, to whom she now turned, with increasing confidence, for advice.

Even this supreme effort had little effect on the more advanced Reformers. Knox viewed every man in her train with suspicion, and Mary herself almost with dislike, and when the Protestant barons of the kingdom, robbed of the plunder which they had expected from the overthrow of the beneficed Clergy of the Church of Rome, by the protection given to her Church by the Queen, banded themselves together against her, her cup of bitterness seemed full to overflowing.

Such was the home-coming of Mary Stuart so eagerly looked for and welcomed, yet in a few short weeks the shadow of her most tragic life had declared itself, and she was at variance with the violent and bitter fanaticism of the Reformation. She was the first Stuart to cross swords with that stern force, destined to have such a fatal and crushing effect upon the fortunes of herself and her dynasty, which was to send her and her grandson to the scaffold, and ultimately to drive her great-grandson from the throne of the three kingdoms.

Her own belief in the faith of her fathers was to be repeated in her descendants in three of the five generations which were to follow her, and was to cause the ruin and finally the utter destruction of Scotland's Royal Line of Kings. Possibly it was necessary for the greatness and the glory of Scotland, and later on, of England, but—ah! the pity of it all!

CHAPTER II

MARY, THE QUEEN AND THE WOMAN

BEFORE proceeding with the narration of the sequence of events which led up to the marriages and the resulting tragedies of Mary's life, it is necessary to touch, as briefly as may be, upon the personal character of the Queen and of her immediate familiars; of the Lord James, Lethington, and Elizabeth's emissary Randolph, of her household and servants, and upon the political situation in Scotland, with which the girl-Queen was called upon to deal, at an age when most girls of the period were scarcely permitted opinions of their own.

A sketch of her personal appearance was given in the last chapter, and is believed to be as correct as it is possible to make it. The suggestions that she had blue, black, or dark-grey eyes, dark brown or black hair, may be dismissed as absolute fabrications, or as careless errors arising from an examination of miniatures, portraits or other delineations of the Queen's features, in which these characteristics were either falsely represented or the portraits were entirely false, as indeed the great majority of them have been clearly shown to be, in Sir Lionel Cust's careful work.[1] The author says:

"There are certain distinctive points in the features of Mary Stuart, as shown in her portraits, which are

[1] *Authentic Portraits of Mary Queen of Scots.*

of the greatest importance as aids to identification.[1] Scharf writes that 'amongst these the most remarkable is the colour of the eyes. They are decidedly brown, sometimes of a yellowish hue (hazel), but more frequently of an absolutely reddish colour like chestnut and the paint known to artists as burnt sienna.'"

Again the same author writes:

"Judging from her more youthful portraits, Mary Stuart's hair was of a yellowish auburn hue, with dark shades in it, such as might be expected from the daughter of a Stuart and the grand-daughter of a Tudor on the one side, and the fair-haired Mary de Guise on the other. Brantôme speaks of her hair as 'blonds et cendrez.' Later in life, she, like most ladies of the period, varied her coiffure with false hair and showed some predilection for a darker hue even approaching to black."[2]

This would of course account for the dark hair shown in some of the later portraits.

These are the descriptions of perhaps the best informed modern student of Mary Stuart's features and colouring, but we need only quote one more, this time that of a contemporary observer, Sir James Melvil, definitely to settle this much disputed point of colouring, for he not only had daily associations with her for a long period, but he had specially described his mistress to Queen Elizabeth when on his mission to London in 1564, and his clear comparison of the two Queens is on record: "Elizabeth's hair was more red than yellow," says Melvil, "whilst Mary's was light auburn, with chestnut coloured eyes."[3]

[1] *i.e.* of authentic portraits.—Author.

[2] *Authentic Portraits of Mary Queen of Scots*, pp. 16-17.

[3] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 65.

As to her character at the time when she returned to Scotland from France we have abundant evidence that she was loving, subservient to the will of others, modest, and, for her position, unassuming.

Throckmorton, Elizabeth's astute Ambassador in Paris, wrote of her at the end of 1560: "During her husband's lifetime there was no great account made of her and there was no great occasion to know what was in her," and we have the same close observer's reflected opinion (for Elizabeth had never seen her) in Mary's remark to him in July 1561:

"The Queen, your Mistress, doth say I am young and do lack experience, but I have age enough and experience to behave myself towards friends and kinsfolk, friendly and uprightly."[1]

The same modern author who gives us these quotations remarks:

"Certainly up to the date of her leaving France the unostentatious Mary had neither shown nor had opportunity of showing any remarkable qualities, unless the obedience and affection apparent in all her letters be classed as such, and after her arrival in her Kingdom one searches in vain for evidence of resolution and far-seeing diplomacy."[2]

General Mahon ignores the one outstanding evidence of Mary's spirited refusal to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh, and her ability to more than hold her own on that occasion against Throckmorton and Elizabeth herself, but otherwise his estimate of her character is remarkably accurate. The reputation which has been given her by her enemies, that of a cruel, headstrong,

[1] *Mary Queen of Scots*, by Major-General R. H. Mahon, p. 21.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

lustful, bigoted Queen, originated entirely in the pictures painted of her by her brother, by Buchanan acting under Moray's orders, by Cecil and by the Earl of Lennox, as I hope to demonstrate beyond dispute, and as indeed has already been claimed in the little work last quoted, and which I again quote to give the author's summing up of her early character :

"As it is, I can only find a graceful, charming, delicate girl, easily given to tears, brought up to believe herself by divine intervention a ruler, but totally untrained by contact with affairs to take her position ; sincerely anxious to play her part and passionately resenting any infringement of her royal dignity. So used to homage and the observance of a court etiquette in which royalty could unbend without any thought of reciprocity, that she had no defence against the rude manners of Scotland * * * loyal to those who stood by her, and infinitely trusting, unfortunately without that peculiar gift of selecting the trustworthy.

"That her moral standard was high I do not doubt for a moment, I mean particularly the physical quality of virtue. It would be so from no higher consideration than the laws of custom which shielded royal ladies more than lesser mortals, but it was also because she was naturally religious and modest."[1]

Here is Mary as I would have you believe her when she returned to Edinburgh that August of 1561, with inherent qualities which so ill-fitted her to cope with the treachery, the unscrupulousness and the bigotry by which she was immediately to be faced and ruined.

Let us now consider the material with which she had to work, her new advisers ; the successors to the courtly French ministers, to the wise old Cardinal of

[1] *Mary Queen of Scots*, by Major-General R. H. Mahon, p. 26.

Lorraine, the Constable of Montmorency and the dominating Queen-Mother, Catherine de Medicis, by whom she had been sheltered or entirely controlled throughout the whole of her previous existence.

First we have her natural brother, the Lord James Stuart, shortly to become Earl of Moray, and already Prior of St Andrews from his boyhood by her father's ill-advised selection, whom, as she herself taunted him, she had "raised from simple prior to Lord and Earl." Secretive, ambitious, utterly unscrupulous, he was a traitor from the outset, who coveted her power, if not indeed her throne. Strickland says[1]:

"One cause of Moray's secret hatred of Queen Mary, was that she refused to legitimate and place him next to herself in the regal succession,"

and this would seem undoubtedly to be a fact.

As we have seen, he endeavoured to secure her interception by the ships of Elizabeth on the very journey to Scotland which he had been sent by the Scottish Parliament to induce her to undertake, when as Chalmers trenchantly states, if he had succeeded "the Lord James would have reigned in Scotland." That incident and those statements are eloquent of the whole seven years of Mary's life in Scotland, for Moray's tenacity of purpose exhibited in the first incident, never relaxed until his objective, revealed in the second, was finally achieved. Such was her principal "adviser"!

Next William Maitland of Lethington, her mother's professed friend and servant, to whom she committed the responsible office of Secretary of State. The

[1] Agnes Strickland. *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., p. 204.

character of this powerful man is obscure and rather uncertain. That he served her well, and more faithfully than most, until after her marriage to Bothwell, is apparent, but it is certain that he was greatly under Moray's influence, and he was also a party to the plot to intercept her on her voyage. He was a signatory of the "band" to murder Darnley, yet one of her false accusers of the crime of which he himself was guilty. He abandoned her and joined her persecutors after Carberry Hill, yet again reverted to her faction whilst she was imprisoned in England, and he died in her service. One of the wittiest men of his age, an astute and able politician, he is described by Chalmers[1] as the "ablest and corruptest minister in Britain next to Cecil," and considered one of her greatest enemies throughout her reign. I cannot go so far as this; he certainly served her well, so long as it suited him! but he well deserved his two nicknames "the Chameleon" and "Master Michael Wylie." With Moray he ruled Scotland, and *at every step of the way* he guided, advised or persuaded Scotland's Queen until her fatal marriage with Bothwell.

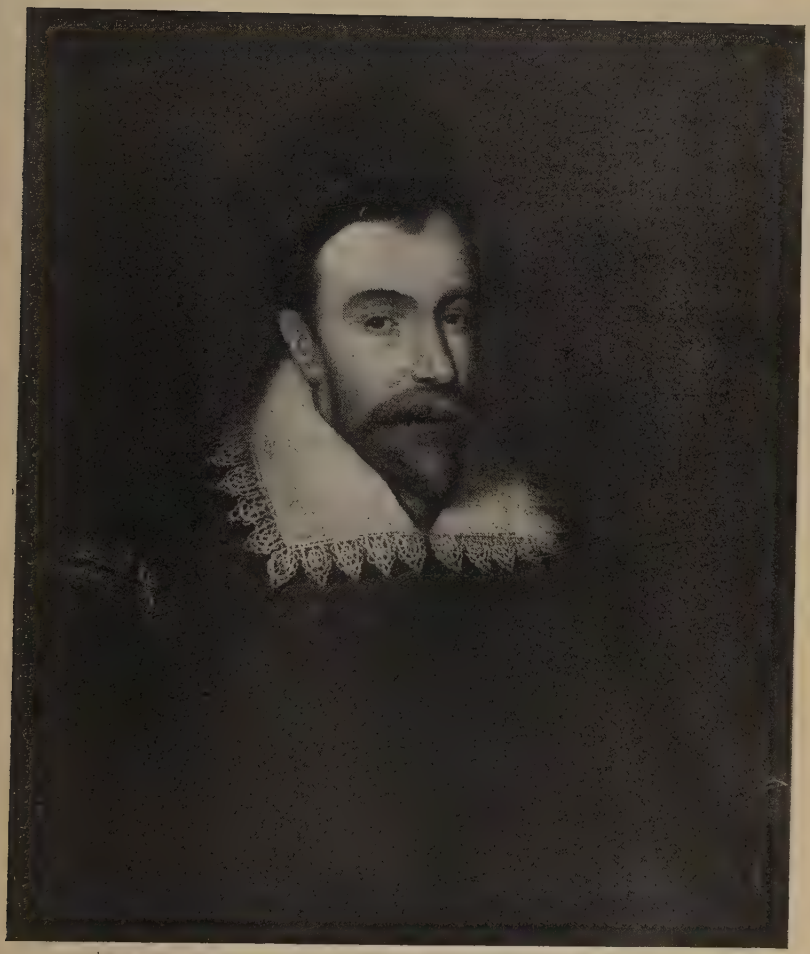
Let us consider definite and still existing documentary proofs of this, and of the dominion of these two men over the Queen.[2]

On 7th October 1561, Cecil wrote to the Earl of Sussex, "The Queen of Scotland is, I hear, most governed by the Lord James and Lethington."

On 4th November 1561, Randolph reported to Cecil, "The Lord James is commander of the Queen."

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 49.

[2] Extracts, from *Mary Queen of Scots* (Mahon), p. 39.



William Maitland of Lethington

From the picture at Thirlestane Castle
Reproduced by kind permission of the Earl of Lauderdale

[*Face p.* 20

On 7th June 1562, Cecil wrote to Challoner, "The whole governance rests with the Lord James and the Laird of Lethington."

Buchanan, in his *History*, writes "The Queen seemed to have got some power by the Earl of Moray's absence."

On 2nd January 1563, Hay wrote, "The Queen's power is nominal only."

Camden wrote, "The Queen herself Moray held in his power as a tutor does a pupil."

In May 1567, Melvil wrote to Cecil, "The Lords will in nowise think her at liberty, albeit she be persuaded to say otherwise."

Randolph reports to Cecil (undated), "I have requested Lethington so to deal that such resolution may appear to proceed from her own desire than led thereto by persuasion. * * * He finds no such ripeness of experience or maturity of judgment as in the Queen's Majesty (Elizabeth)."

The Lords Commissioners in 1568 recorded, "He (the Earl of Moray) caused the Queen's Majesty become subject to him as her Grace had been a pupil."

There can be no possible refutation of such evidence as this. Melvil and the Commissioners were the Queen's friends it is true, Hay may be considered her partisan, but Cecil was Moray's friend, and Mary's bitterest and most powerful English antagonist next to Elizabeth herself; and Randolph, that voluminous correspondent, was Elizabeth's emissary to Scotland, and Cecil's most able spy! There is no doubt that from the very first the Queen's every important action, her words and her appearance, were reported to Cecil by his representative at her Court.

Her chief officer of State under Moray was the Chancellor. This office was filled firstly by the Earl of Huntly, her brother's old enemy, the principal Catholic Baron of her Kingdom, whom Moray, seizing his opportunity, pushed deeper into treason and harried to his death. Huntly was succeeded by the Earl of Morton, appointed for life, who was to prove one of the Queen's most implacable enemies and persecutors.

Her personal attendants require special attention. Her four Maries are famous—Mary Livingstone, Mary Fleming, Mary Seton and Mary Beaton, daughters of noble families who as children of her own age accompanied Mary to France, and were there educated with her. Besides these close friends she had fifteen ladies and women in waiting who, for reasons of economy doubtless, as well as of fashion, were all dressed in black velvet, and we find items in her most carefully kept wardrobe book, of payments by the Treasurer for their clothing.

Some entries of the Queen's own apparel in the same wardrobe accounts are interesting. She had ten pairs of "wolven hois" (woven hose), of gold and silver and silk, as against Elizabeth's single pair of silk stockings, of which the latter Queen was inordinately proud, as being the first pair brought into England. Mary also had no fewer than thirty-six pairs of velvet shoes laced with gold and silver.[1]

Her diversions were the usual ones of highly-born ladies of her time: hawking, shooting at the butts, or "archery" as it was later to be styled, walking, and her many gardens provided her with outdoor exercise

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 65.

and recreation, whilst chess-playing, and music, were her chief amusements within. On the virginals and on the lute she was a performer of some merit.

Her servants' wages too are carefully recorded. The Head Falconer and a French valet each received £66, 13s. 4d. per annum. The professional lute player was dressed in fine clothes, a velvet hat and a sword. Mary had five "violars" who each received £10 per annum, her schalmer had £59 4s. 0d. (Scots), and in addition she had pipers and singers and performers on the organs in Holyrood-house Chapel. These organs were a pair of the very few that had survived the first days of the Reformation, for those in most of the Scottish churches had been destroyed as profane instruments.

We find, too, an interesting entry in the wardrobe book, of the early wages paid to David Rizzio in January 1561-2 when he received £89 and was described as "virlat in the Queen's chamber." He was appointed French secretary in December 1564 in place of Roulet, a Frenchman who was believed to have betrayed some of Mary's correspondence to Randolph and others.

Rizzio was a fine singer, and a lute-player of no mean order, and apart from his utility in dealing with the Queen's correspondence, he quickly made a strong appeal to her romantic and musical soul by the beauty of his voice and his ability to sing the old French and Italian airs of which she was so passionately fond. So we get, from these old chronicles, a very fair idea of Mary's entourage in the early years of her residence in Scotland.

The Queen's re-marriage became a matter of urgent

political concern in both England and Scotland, for the two thrones were each wanting a direct heir, and Elizabeth's expressed intention "to live and die a virgin Queen," made it a matter of necessity that the Queen of Scots should contract an alliance that would be likely to provide a monarch for both Kingdoms. This was assured to any offspring of Mary's marriage, if that marriage were made with the sister Queen's approval, but the portents were not favourable at the moment.

Elizabeth's jealous nature had ruled out several suitable aspirants; and from her point of view, the alliance which seemed most politic to Mary, marriage with Don Carlos of Spain, was one to be prevented at all costs.

Elizabeth was well aware that such a marriage would cause strenuous opposition from the Scottish Reformers, and therefore probably considered that there was not any great probability that the project would be carried out. Nevertheless it was the one marriage which was most undesirable for the interests of England, and another, which was also being talked of, with her late husband's successor, King Charles IX. of France, was only a shade less so. On the score of both religion and politics either marriage was unthinkable to England, for any son of either must in the future make the two Kingdoms of Scotland and England mere vassal states of one or the other of the Catholic European powers with which England was frequently at war, and Elizabeth actually sent word to Mary in 1563 that she could not approve the marriage with Carlos. The suggestion of this marriage had been made very shortly after the death of Mary's first

husband, and before her return to Scotland, when she was only eighteen years of age and the Prince at least two years younger. It had been favoured by King Philip for some time until in 1564 Philip wrote to his Ambassador in London:

"Considering the disposition of my son, and other things which appear in him I see that the fruit which I hoped for will not come of the marriage, that is to say the reduction of Scotland and England to the Catholic religion, for the sake of which I would expose myself to any consequences. I have decided to put an end to all new steps in favour of the Prince."[1]

It would appear from the records that negotiations for the Spanish marriage were going on more or less secretly, and sometimes in a desultory manner, for over three years. We also see the reason—"the reduction of Scotland and England to the Catholic religion"—for Elizabeth's strong opposition to and refusal of her sanction, when she came to hear of it, and so the most probable of the suggested foreign marriages came to naught.

It is certain that Philip was already beginning to doubt whether his son and heir, whom he always hated, was likely to be quite such a ready tool in the furtherance of his plans as he had hoped. Carlos had shown some leanings towards Calvinism; there was a suggestion that he should be sent to the Netherlands, but Philip procrastinated and deferred the project again and again, until at last (in 1567) the unfortunate Prince was thrown into prison and finally executed, undoubtedly by order of his unnatural father and the "Holy Inquisition,"

[1] *Mary Queen of Scots* (Mahon), p. 58.

without any specific crime being alleged against him. King Philip might well write that for the sake of the Catholic religion I would expose myself to any consequences!

This was the first project for Mary's second marriage, but though the negotiations continued for a considerable length of time, many other projects and actual proposals were made during the same period. The wedding of Princes requires more consideration and negotiation than does that of less exalted personages, and individual inclination must have much less influence than State policy in determining the choice.

Marriage-ripe as she was—for her union with the sickly Dauphin of France provided her more with sick nursing than with nuptial embraces—Mary was ready enough for a second venture, and although imbued with a strong sense of duty to her country, she was determined this time not simply to marry a Prince for his rank and station, but to ally herself to a man who could satisfy the starved desires of her passionate nature and be a partaker in her pleasures and pursuits, not merely the joint occupant of the chair of State and the marriage bed. This is clear enough from many records and notes that have come down to us, and we may therefore well imagine that the prospect of marriage with the sickly and stunted Carlos may not have appealed to her personal inclination, however much it seemed attractive on the score of her religion.

Notwithstanding this determination of a natural healthy nature, she, for political reasons, assured Elizabeth that she would not marry without "her good sister's" approval. There is little doubt that

only the suggestion and circumstances of the distasteful Leicester union, led her to ignore such approval and to marry Darnley in despite of the English Queen.

The next aspirant for her hand was the Archduke Charles of Austria whom she refused without hesitation, and both he and another royal personage, the King of Sweden, who had also been suitors for an alliance with Elizabeth of England, received scant consideration, for Mary was well aware how little that imperious woman would relish the idea that any so-called lover of hers should transfer his affection to the Queen of Scots.

Of her own subjects and those of England whom she considered, we shall find their aspirations recorded in due sequence. Politically they were of far less importance than the projects which it has seemed necessary to introduce here for the better understanding of events that had so much influence on Mary's character, political and religious, in the early days of her reign in Scotland.

CHAPTER III

THE "BASTARD OF SCOTLAND"

In pursuance of the policy of conciliation upon which the Queen had determined ere her return to Scotland, she attempted to ingratiate herself with the supporters of the Reformed religion to the utmost, and to that end kept her own faith in the background as much as her conscience would permit; although she continued personally to practise it in spite of the intolerance of Knox and the secret machinations of the Lord James. Both these powerful persons were working for the repression of all adherents to Rome, for widely divergent reasons.

She despatched Lethington on his mission to London within a fortnight of her arrival in Edinburgh, with a message of thanks for Elizabeth's congratulations on her safe return, and an expression of her earnest desire for peace between the two kingdoms. He took advantage of the opportunity thus created, of personally pressing the Scottish Queen's claims to recognition as Elizabeth's successor, and his project had considerable support in English circles. This is shown in a letter from the English Ambassador in France:[1]

"For the matter lately proposed to her Majesty by

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Throckmorton to Cecil, 9th October 1561.

the Laird of Lethington, in which to deal one way or the other you find difficulties, even so I do think, that not to deal with it at all is more dangerous, as well for the Queen's Majesty as for the realm, and especially if God should deal so unmercifully with us as to take the Queen from us without issue, which God forbid."

Nevertheless Elizabeth declined any definite answer and retaliated with a reiterated request for the ratification of the Treaty of Edinburgh, which Mary had already verbally declined in Paris to Throckmorton; consequently Lethington returned to Edinburgh without advancing matters very far.

One of Mary's first proclamations was to lay a charge upon her subjects on the English border, not to cause any friction or violation of the treaty of peace with the Queen of England,[1] but the wild spirits of the Borderers were not to be suppressed by mere paper orders, and such were the continued disturbances that Mary, in October, appointed her brother, the Lord James, her Lieutenant of the Borders, with wide powers to reduce the turbulent moss-troopers to obedience.

James Stuart was no kid-glove warrior, and his warrant was interpreted into a "commission of fire and sword" in a manner which, if harsh, at least had the merit of securing complete submission and, for a time, implicit obedience to the terms of the proclamation. He proceeded to Jedburgh and Dumfries with a strong force, found Hawick occupied by a disorderly mob of marauding freebooters, of whom he promptly hanged twenty out of hand, burned the peel towers of several of the ringleaders, and sent fifty prisoners in chains to

[1] Keith's *History*, p. 181.

Edinburgh. In his own memoirs he states that he "acted with pleasure and alacrity."[1] Thereafter he met the two English Wardens of the Marches, Lord Grey and Sir John Foster, and order was restored! It was, however, only a temporary peace, and the Lord James was to repeat his success four months later, when he returned to Hawick with a still stronger force, surrounded the town and arrested no fewer than fifty-three outlawed moss-troopers and cattle-lifters. He sentenced eighteen of them to instant death, but no trees had been left standing, and no ropes could be found in the town, and so the extraordinary expedient was resorted to, of drowning the whole eighteen in the river Teviot; a brutal but very effectual measure which, we are naïvely told,[2] "reduced the disturbed district to sudden and extraordinary quietness"; as well it might!

With Mary's two principal advisers away from the capital, Lethington in London, and the Lord James on his first "border foray," the Catholic peers and bishops, who had, not unnaturally, felt much incensed at their apparent neglect by the Queen from whom they had hoped great things as their co-religionist, attempted to improve the occasion by a series of visits to her at Holyrood-house. But in pursuit of her settled policy of conciliation of the Reforming party, they gained little ascendancy by their efforts, a circumstance which led Lethington on his return to write to London in a strain which clearly indicated Mary's anxiety for the goodwill of her Protestant subjects:[3]

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 57, note *n*.

[2] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 163.

[3] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Lethington to Cecil, 15th January 1561/2.

"I thank you for your good advice towards our Papists which has yet been mostly followed, and I trust since the Queen's arrival they have obtained no great advantage but, to be plain with you, they be in a worse case a great deal than before."

The most powerful Scottish noble of the Roman faith was George, Earl of Huntly, the old "Cock o' the North," who was overlord and ruler of three of the principal shires in the north, and Chancellor of Scotland. He was a proud, resolute, autocratic old man, inherently loyal according to his lights, which owned his allegiance to the Queen, but permitted his own vassals to own no allegiance to anyone save himself; a typical Highland Chief. Tytler describes him[1] "as one of the most powerful, crafty, unscrupulous men in the country against whom the Lord James placed himself in mortal opposition," but it is at least a moot point whether the adjectives were not better deserved by Huntly's "mortal opponent" than by the old "Cock o' the North"!

There was not much of craft or want of scruple about Huntly; had there been he would not so easily have fallen a victim to the greed and vindictiveness of Mary's base-born brother. Rather was he too straightforward, too outspoken and too honest to be able to contend with the ruthlessness which marked him for destruction.

Another of the Lord James's enemies was the Duke of Châtelherault, the Queen's cousin, whose eldest son had assumed as his courtesy title, the Duke's Scottish one, Earl of Arran. He was head of the powerful

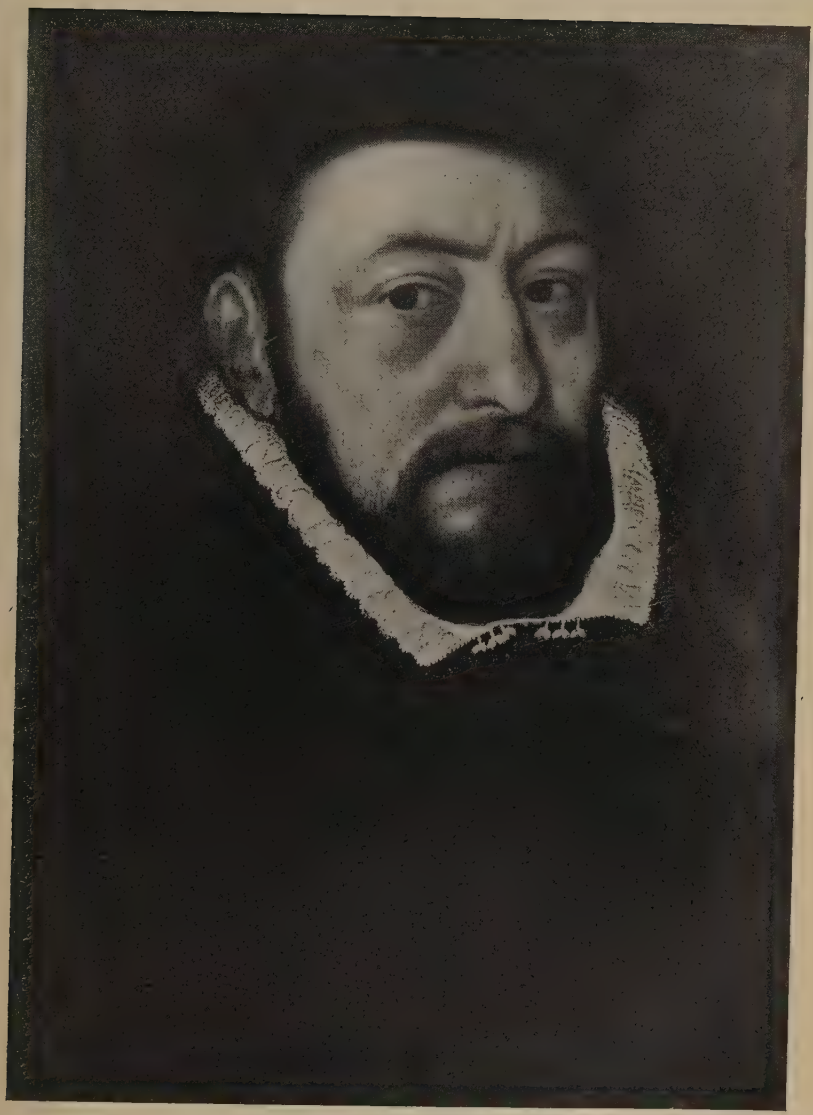
[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 157.

Hamilton Clan and, after Mary, the next heir to the Scottish crown. The Hamiltons had undoubtedly long cherished the hope that they would eventually rule in Scotland, if not indeed in both Kingdoms, and in 1560 the Treaty of Berwick had proposed a marriage between Elizabeth and the Earl of Arran. On Mary's return to Scotland, after paying the necessary homage on her arrival, the Duke and his son had retired to Dumbarton Castle, of which the former was Governor, and they now joined with Huntly and the other nobles and Bishops of the Roman faith who were endeavouring to renew a league with the Princes of the House of Guise for the re-establishment of the Roman religion; although the Duke was professedly a Reformer.

Such was the plastic material which the Lord James found ready to his hand on his return from his successful campaign on the Border, and with Lethington also at his command, he did not hesitate to set his schemes in motion. Large portions of the property of the Church had been "acquired" by the greedy Hamiltons, and these the Queen now required should be surrendered to the Crown, largely for the aggrandisement of Protestant claimants for despoiled Church lands, of whom the Lord James was one of the principal, but also for the maintenance of ministers of the Reformed religion.

We read that these ministers received a "wretched pittance" though "it was a legal recognition of the right of Presbyterian Ministers to be supported by the State," and also that "the Lord James and Maitland of Lethington with Argyll and Morton superintended every step."[1]

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 160.



James Stuart, Earl of Moray

From the painting at Holyrood-house
Reproduced by gracious permission of His Majesty the King

[*Face p.* 32

The cynical Randolph, now formally appointed "Resident" at Holyrood, trenchantly summed up the situation in a letter to Cecil.[1] He says:

"The Duke beginith now to grieve—he must needs depart from seven parts of Arbroath; the Bishop of St Andrews (another Hamilton) from as much of his livings, the Lord Claud, the Duke's son in England future successor to Paisley, also the seventh; the Abbot of Kilwinning as much, besides divers other of that race, so that many a Hamilton shall shortly be turned a-begging. I know not whether this be able to make the Duke a Papist again."

James Stuart had thus effectually despoiled the Hamiltons and had aroused their enmity against the Queen, and he now proceeded to pull the strings of another puppet—the Earl of Huntly. Within the province of that nobleman were the fair lands and revenues of Moray, which he had enjoyed for many years and of which he claimed the abeyant Earldom. This was coveted by the Lord James, and he had more than once hinted to his sister and Queen that the title should be conferred upon him. So now, on his return from his successful Border campaign, when she had expressed her intention to confer a signal mark of her favour upon him, his hopes ran high.

Soon after his return in February 1562, he was married, with much ceremony, to Agnes Keith, a daughter of the Earl Marischal, and at the banquet which followed he received from the hands of the Queen a gold cup and the expected Earldom—not, however, to his great chagrin, that of Moray, but

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 15th January 1561/2.

another which had reverted to the Crown—and he was created Earl of Mar, a title previously claimed by his mother's father, Lord Erskine, but then in abeyance.

At this time the project of paying a visit of ceremony to Queen Elizabeth, of creating a personal friendship with her, and of securing by Act of Parliament her claim to succeed to the throne of England, obsessed Mary's mind. Cecil had strongly advised Lethington to arrange the meeting; Mary had ardently adopted the proposal, and negotiations were going on in a considerable correspondence between the two secretaries. In the midst of these negotiations curious incidents occurred which, whilst in themselves relatively unimportant, were to have a direct bearing on following events, and gave the Earl of Mar, always ready to grasp at any opportunity to further his plans, a powerful weapon against his two principal political opponents.

Both the Duke of Châtelherault, and the Earl of Huntly, had advanced claims on behalf of their respective heirs, the Earl of Arran and the Lord Gordon, as suitors for the hand of the Queen, and both had been declined.

After a dissolute night of debauch in the city of Edinburgh in which the Earl of Bothwell and the Marquis d'Elbœuf had insulted a mistress of the Earl of Arran, a quarrel ensued and some blood was shed. The Duke, hastening to his son's assistance, met an armed body of the Gordons under old Huntly himself, and a miniature battle was the result; the Earl of Mar promptly represented to the Queen that the peace of the Kingdom and his own safety (!) was in danger

in such lawless proceedings. Randolph reported the matter to Cecil[1] with the remark "Of so likely a matter of mischief, I never saw so little hurt"; but Randolph did not then foresee the mischief which was to ensue!

Mary was naturally incensed, more at the insult to herself in the unworthy nature of the quarrel between recent suitors for her hand, it is to be presumed, than at the tumult itself. Both disputants were brought before her, and bound over to keep the peace, but in March the Earl of Arran, always a neurotic and inconsequent person, suddenly formulated a charge against Bothwell of having conspired with Arran and his kinsman the Abbot of Kilwinning, to seize the person of the Queen and carry her off to Dumbarton Castle, murder the Earl of Mar and usurp the Government.

History, somewhat tolerantly, says that Arran was mad, and such was the verdict of the Privy Council which tried the case. Randolph gives some colour for this in his subsequent letters,[2] but there are suspicious circumstances in the fact that the Privy Council was at this time entirely the tool of the Earl of Mar, who had previously announced his "fear" of danger to himself. Arran is supposed to have said that he was "bewitched by the mother of the Lord James,"[3] and it is certain that the Queen committed him to ward in Edinburgh Castle on her brother's advice.

We can much more easily credit the story that the plot originated in the ungoverned mind of the reckless Earl of Bothwell, for it bears a prophetic similarity to

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 31st March 1562.
[2] MS. letters, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 7th and 9th April 1562.
[3] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 162.

his later actions, and we need waste no sympathy over the sentence of imprisonment passed upon him. The Abbot of Kilwinning was also imprisoned, and the Duke required to surrender his custody of Dumbarton Castle. It is said that he bewailed the ruin of his house with tears.[1]

In a letter from Randolph to Queen Elizabeth in person, on this strange plot and its sequel, we find a delightful tribute to Mary's sorrow and kindliness to her cousin the Duke in this matter,[2] and it needs little more than this letter from one who was, in effect, a foreign spy on her actions, to prove the gentleness of her character at this time. The letter concludes:

"What grief this is unto her heart it hath appeared in many ways and she hath wished that it could be known unto your Majesty; without whose advice, I believe, she will not hastily determine anything. * * * Of these things, because the whole country doth bear witness, my testimony needeth the less."

Not a word of my Lord of Mar in these proceedings or correspondence, which, with the evidence of his usual practice on similar occasions later, makes the circumstance the more suspicious, and one wonders how much the proceedings of the Privy Council, and the discovery of the "madness" of the Earl of Arran, owed to the crafty mind of that ambitious nobleman.

On the 19th of May, Mary laid the project for a personal meeting with Elizabeth before her Council.

Chalmers writes of this meeting:[3] "Whether Cecil

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 162.

[2] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Queen Elizabeth, 9th April 1562.

[3] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 63.

or Maitland suggested this idle purpose cannot now be told." Again no mention of Mar, whose name might quite well have been added by Chalmers to the other two, for whoever the actual proposer, there is little doubt where the project originated! The Council left the matter to her own discretion, "if she should think her own person to be in any surety upon any promise to be made by the English Queen." We know from many evidences, before and afterwards, just what "surety" it was safe to place on any such promises!

However, Lethington was again sent off to London to arrange the meeting; the Queen wrote to Lord Robert Dudley, and the Earl of Mar wrote to Cecil on the same subject, strongly advocating the journey. What did he hope would result from it?

What her Council *feared* may be quoted here, for after repeated postponements they "nevertheless declared that they would nowise give her counsel to commit her body in England, and therefore referred the place of meeting *and the security of her own person* to herself."[1]

Meanwhile Mar had departed on his second punitive expedition, and returned with enhanced military reputation and civil power, to be shortly followed by the return of Lethington with Elizabeth's consent to meet the Queen of Scots at Nottingham, but it would seem that she soon repented, for she seized upon the pretext of religious agitation which suddenly flamed up in France, to postpone Mary's journey.

She sent Sir Henry Sidney to Edinburgh in July

[1] Keith, p. 221.

with protestations of affection and sorrow at the necessity for postponement, and assured Mary—

"that to have seen her dear sister that summer was her earnest desire; that she now delayed the meeting with the utmost reluctance and had so fully determined to enjoy her company in the spring that she sent by Sidney her confirmation of the treaty for the interview, leaving it to her to fix upon any days between 20th May and the last of August for it."[1]

Mary received the English message in the presence of her secretary, Lethington, and the Earl of Mar. Tears of vexation and hurt pride stood in her eyes as she listened to the honeyed words from the lips of Sir Henry Sidney, and although the message was cordial and apparently sincere, Mary felt that behind its seeming friendliness there lay a dissimulation and an antagonism, which were to be only too well confirmed in years to come.

Chalmers tells of another most suspicious incident during Sir Henry Sidney's embassage.[2] He states that:

"Whilst the Queen was enjoying the conversation of the accomplished Sidney in the garden of Holyrood-house, an occurrence happened which illustrates the coarse manners of a brutish military. Captain Heiborne approached the Queen and delivered her a packet which she, being engaged with Sir Henry Sidney, delivered unopened to the Earl of Mar to be considered, and he, at first taking no great care of it, at length opened it when he found some *ribalde verses* and an obscene drawing." Chalmers goes on to say that "the insult being offered in the presence of the English

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 165.
[2] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 64.

Ambassador, he might judge of her otherwise," which he would undoubtedly be prone to do! Randolph wrote[1] that "Heiborne is fled out of her country, not doubting that he will be apprehended * * * and to that effect I have written to the Lord Governor of Berwick." Chalmers naïvely adds, "What ought we to think of Mar's address and manners, who instead of offending the Queen's delicacy ought to have committed Heiborne's ribaldry to the fire."

What indeed? Let us examine this seemingly disgraceful but otherwise unimportant incident!

Here we have a proud, and, then at least, an admittedly virtuous Queen, discussing State matters with a foreign ambassador in the presence of her chief Minister and her Court. She is approached by a "brutish military," a mere captain, never before or after even mentioned, who hands a packet to her, and she, preoccupied, hands it to her chief Minister! (Much more probable that Heiborne handed it directly to the Earl of Mar and was *paid* to do so, one would think!)

The Minister opens the packet, finds it to contain ribald verses and an obscene drawing, and instead of crushing them in his hand, carefully arranges that they are seen, presumably read, by the Queen and the English Ambassador, "so that he might judge of her otherwise." It has been suggested that there is no *proof* that Mar let the missive be seen or read, but if not how did Randolph hear or learn of the occurrence?

Is there any shadow of possibility in the story, or that Mar could make such a grievous blunder, except

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 10th August 1562.

of intent? Could a mere captain of a "brutish military" approach the Queen at all under such circumstances, and hand her a packet containing "ribald verses and obscene drawings," except with the connivance and protection of the chief Minister? Could the careful and astute Mar be so far confounded as to show the obscenities to all and sundry, unless he *intended to do so*? And finally, why should Captain Heiborne fear apprehension if his intimacy with the Queen was such as to lead him into such an indiscretion, and how could he fly out of the country unless everything were in readiness for him to do so? The answers, the plot, and the intention to discredit the Queen's character, are self-evident to any unbiased mind, and the author of the whole incident not less so, in the light of after events!

The hopes for the English meeting ended, it was suggested that the Queen should make a progress through the northern portions of her dominions, to visit the Earl of Huntly at Strathbogie, twelve miles from Aberdeen, thence to pass through the provinces of Moray and Inverness. We are told[1] that it "was proposed, for the quiet of the country, by her ministers and accepted by her because it was proposed by them."

This is quite probable, and we can again see the hand of my Lord of Mar in the proposal! Chalmers points an accusing finger here when he says:[2]

"As this journey was founded in imposture, so was Randolph imposed upon by Mar the Minister, and Maitland the Secretary, to believe that the Queen desired to

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 77.
[2] *Ibid.*—note.

take so terrible a journey of her own free will. This journey, the events will show, had two objects: (1) to put the Earl of Mar in possession of the Earldom of Moray for which he had a grant in his pocket of which no one knew; (2) to ruin Huntly who had claims on and possession of the same Earldom."

Here is an old impeachment of my Lord of Mar, and Chalmers's remarks on his determination to acquire the Earldom of Moray throw so illuminating a light on Mar's baseness and perfidy, that it is extraordinary that so little reference has been made to them by subsequent historians. At the risk of being considered tedious, I cannot refrain from an extensive quotation of the case as presented by this careful writer:[1]

"The person who last died possessed of the Earldom of Moray was James Stuart, an illegitimate son of James IV. Upon his decease without male issue, in December 1544, the Earldom reverted to the crown. Huntly was a pretender to that great prize though he did not enjoy the inheritance of the Earldom, but as late as 1564 some of his family enjoyed rights within the Earldom of which they could not be denuded without legal authority.

"Meantime the Lord James had formed the resolution of acquiring possessions in the North by whatever means. He acquired by artifice the whole Earldom of Buchan, and after the decease of the late Earl of Moray, he placed his affections on that rich succession. At the Queen's marriage in 1558 he solicited for the Earldom of Moray, but she advised him to remain in the Church. He renewed his solicitations when he offered his duty to the Queen in 1561. She did not altogether comply with his wishes, though she gave him some hopes that she

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., pp. 77 *et seq.* (abridged).

would gratify his desire when she should arrive within her Kingdom.

"When she arrived in August 1561, she invested the Lord James with her whole authority, and now resigned her mind to her minister that he could ask nothing which was not granted. He obtained on the 30th January 1561/2, under the privy seal, the Queen's grant of the Earldom of Moray. This was merely an inchoate title leading to a complete one.

"On the 7th February 1561/2, in opposition to the claims of the Erskines, he assumed the title of the Earl of Mar. Huntly, as Chancellor, had the custody of the great seal, so that Mar could not apply for a grant under it without avowing to Huntly and to the world, his ultimate and real views. The title of Mar was probably assumed for a time in order to mask the real object.

"Huntly was the second noble in the Kingdom, was the Queen's Chancellor, and enjoyed the greatest influence in the Northern Shires. The Earl of Mar clearly perceived that with a title so defective he could not cope with Huntly either in the country or in the Court of Session, and he was thus induced to obtain possession of his object, to carry the Queen into the North, with her ministers and Court, and with some armed men in order to obtain by force what he would not have acquired by law. Huntly was unconscious of those practices against him and could take no measures of protection.

"Yet have historians made it a question whether there was a plot against Murray or a conspiracy of Murray against Huntly. There is satisfactory evidence of a plot by Murray against Huntly, but none for a plot by Huntly."

Here we have in clear and concise language, considering that it was written nearly one hundred and

twenty years ago, the most damning indictment of the "Bastard of Scotland" that, in my judgment, has ever been penned. In this we see the beginning of his active treason against his Queen, which never relaxed until he had ruined her and usurped her place; and I fearlessly assert that most of the charges which were alleged against her in her own times, and since, had their origin in the brain of this one man and found their pronouncement through the mouths of his creatures, whom he coerced, paid, or terrified into doing the work that he himself was far too crafty to attempt.

Even so early as his plot against Huntly he seized upon a ready weapon: in July Sir John Gordon of Findlater, Huntly's second son, met Lord Ogilvie of Cardal on the High Street of Edinburgh. Swords were drawn and Ogilvie dangerously wounded. Findlater was committed to ward by the Provost, but with Highland intrepidity effected his escape into his father's territory.

This was enough for Mar. He proceeded to inflame the Queen against the Gordons, and induced her to send stringent orders to the Earl of Huntly to bring the offender before her. This was arranged, and Findlater was ordered into ward in Stirling Castle, but, unfortunately for his father and himself, on the way he again escaped from his guards, gathered a force of a thousand of his father's clansmen and disappeared into the fastnesses of Badenoch.

Naturally Mary was furious at this further defiance of her authority, and we may assume that the Earl of Mar missed no opportunity to increase her resentment

against Findlater and to hint at his father's treasonable connivance in his conduct.

When, therefore, early in August, her Ministers proposed her progress through the northern provinces "for the quiet of the country," Mar's plans were all in train and Huntly's doom was already sealed.

CHAPTER IV

"COCK O' THE NORTH"

THE Northern progress was decided on. The Queen was to be accompanied by a full Council, and such a force of soldiery as might be able to protect her and her Court against all eventualities in a wild and desolate region of the Highlands, where the Reformed religion had scarcely made any headway at all, but where she knew her co-religionists owed little fealty to their Sovereign, but very much to the Chiefs of their names and clans.

Preparations were pushed on, and the courtiers and councillors who were to attend the Queen were gathered at Holyrood-house. It was the last day of an August carnival, which Mary and her Maries attended; gay, laughing, inconsequent girls together once more, with the cares of State and widowhood thrown aside, and the problems of roystering brawlers, and of political match-makers, alike forgotten in the joy of the first wholesomely festive occasion since her return from France a whole year ago.

The carnival was to conclude with a masque at Holyrood-house, and on the morrow the final Council was to be held ere the Queen's departure on the following day. It must have been a memorable scene, that summer carnival, and we can picture the

girl-Queen the brightest and gayest of the many beautiful women gathered at the Court. The dimly-lit gardens, the throbbing lute strings and the gay throng of courtiers in their multicoloured costumes, the moonlight and the soft splash of fountains; light laughter, and love the theme of the youths and maidens of the Court. Mary Fleming walking sedately through the galliard with Lethington; who, thin, a little grey about the temples, and very inscrutable about the eyes, was now paying her his restrained but very obvious attentions, and the Queen rallied the girl on her "middle-aged" swain.

Randolph, Elizabeth's emissary and "Resident" at the Court, might be observed whispering in the ear of pretty Mistress Beaton, and for some long time he remained her suitor. There is no record of how or when the affair was broken off, though we know of Mary Beaton's marriage to Ogilvy of Boyne, but it seems certain that she was, for a very considerable period, practically affianced to Randolph; whether this was a part of his considered policy or not, it is certain that he obtained many of the intimate incidents of the Queen's private life and conversation, which he religiously passed on in detail to his master, Cecil, from this source.

Mary Livingstone, with John Sempill, the young "Master" of his house, as her avowed lover, hinted of "mysteries" to come after supper, in the masque which was to exceed in extravagance everything that had gone before, as the conclusion of the revels.

Mary Seton and Mary the Queen were the only two of the five girls who were fancy-free and unattached at the Holyrood masque.

The Palace of Holyrood-house, Exterior (present day)

[*Face p.* 46

It was a mad evening—not very harmful, not very proper perhaps, in some of its incidents—and it was to end with a secret masked dance, "La purpose," of which there was much whispered talk amongst the selected performers of the mummery. Eight of the Court ladies were to appear masked and habited in men's clothing, and eight of the gallants of the Court train, the Queen's French pages, her poet Châtelard, and one or two young Scots noblemen, were to partner them in ruff and farthingale.

It was a foolish business, and all eyes were on two figures who were the centre of the revels. A doublet of white velvet and gold, trunk-hose of vivid green on her shapely legs, a short scarlet French cloak hanging from her shoulders, a jewel in her left ear, and a flat cap cocked over the right one, with a pink silk mask covering the upper part of her face, hid the pink and white beauty of Mary the Queen in a gallant of the Court. With her was a mincing figure in a white hooped petticoat spangled with gold, a tight-fitting bodice of purple and white, and an enormous ruff—Monsieur de Châtelard! He entered into the gallic spirit of the play with zest; he curtsied to his "sweet lord," and leaned upon his breast! He vowed eternal fidelity at one moment, and swore he had been unfaithful the next! He protested he was dying for love of "mon mari," and begged the Queen to kiss him! Tired of the man, and of his importunities, Mary did kiss him, and sent him about his business! The fool was mad in his folly; he had dared, and thought he might dare more, but the Queen had had enough of him, and in a moment he was forgotten.

At the end of the revels my Lord of Mar arrived, a veritable bird of ill-omen. With a word here and a nod there, "looking through his fingers" as he spoke, he breathed his news. The word flew round, and at last, through Mary Beaton, reached the Queen's ears—the Lord Gordon was said to have married the Lady Margaret Hamilton, daughter of the Duke of Châtelherault! The Gordon, her lover of less than a month ago, and the son of her contumacious subject, married to her own cousin!

The Queen was incredulous at first, then furious. Such an insult to her pride and majesty was beyond bearing. No Royal sanction asked by Châtelherault, nor by Huntly, nor by Gordon! She retired hurriedly to her chamber, stormed and wept to her ladies in turn as they helped her to disrobe; and this was the moment chosen by the miserable Châtelard to secrete himself in her chamber, hugging himself with the thought that the mummery of the masque in which he had played the husband, could be enacted again in reality in the darkness of the night, without reproof. He was soon discovered; Mary, in her shift, seared him to the very soul with her white scorn—and gave him twenty-four hours to get out of Scotland!

Which cooled the ardour of Monsieur de Châtelard —for a time!

On the following afternoon the appointed Council was held. Mary received Lord Ruthven, who was sworn of her Council; gaunt, haggard, and fierce, his sinister appearance was aggravated by a death-like pallor which accorded well with a snarling speech, and was the forerunner of the malady which was soon to kill him.

My Lord Lindsay too, fierce, implacable, and strongest supporter of the Reformed religion; the Earls of Morton and Argyll, the former to become Regent of Scotland in after years, and the latter a half-brother, by marriage, to the Queen, having wedded the blood sister of the Earl of Mar: the gathering of the wolves, not a single true friend of the Queen amongst them!

And my Lord of Mar himself, crafty, scheming, ambitious, "standing ever to the left of the throne, and ever looking to the right," as Mary was once warned by her confessor, Father Leslie. "Looking through his fingers" was Lethington's famous phrase, years afterwards; always ready and able to disappear at the crucial moment and leave others to pay the penalty of his actions. Born the "Bastard of Scotland," of her whom King James V. is said to have loved best in his life, and thought of when he went a-wooing to France, Mar had always considered himself more fitted than his sister and Queen to occupy the throne of Scotland, instead of merely "standing ever to the left" of it.

"Does my brother desire my throne?" the Queen had asked of her Confessor, on the same occasion, and there was reason in the question. History has supplied the answer!

But at the Council we are considering, the dearest ambition of the moment in the treacherous heart of James Stuart, Earl of Mar, was the abeyant Earldom of Moray—and certainly the lands of that fair province. The Earl of Huntly owned the lands and claimed the title as of right, and though the Lord James had

suggested the Earldom of Moray as his reward for his foray on the Border, the Queen at the time had ignored his request, and created him Earl of Mar instead.

Of such was Mary's Council composed on this Tuesday evening. Protestants all, and the subject the recalcitrance of the Earl of Huntly! Small chance had he, the Queen's most powerful co-religionist, of forbearance in such a gathering, or the Queen of protecting him, even had she wished. But Mary herself was bitterly incensed at Huntly's flouting of her command to bring back his son, Findlater, to ward in Stirling Castle.

The Council was soon over. "What would you have me do with Huntly?" asked Mary in its concluding phase. "Hang him on his own dule tree, Madam," came in Ruthven's rasping tones. "The axe and block," suggested the fierce Lindsay. "Nay, nay," Mar's voice broke in, "that were too hard a fate for his son's fault. Put him to the horn for his disobedience to your Grace's orders, and deny him his claim to the Earldom of Moray." But Mar was not yet to proclaim himself to the world as Earl of Moray, for the Queen refused his hint.

At the same time Randolph reports another strange occurrence to Cecil[1] which shows how very thoroughly he was "in the know" of every little happening in the Queen's private life, and lends colour to my suggestion that much of his information came from Mary Beaton; though in this case he infers that Lethington was his

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 1st August 1562.

informant—a most unlikely thing if the facts were as he narrated them!

The Queen had news of the imminent arrival of an emissary from the Pope, a Jesuit Bishop, on a secret embassage. So violent were the feelings against all Papists that the Queen dared not receive him openly and, says Randolph, Lethington conveyed him by stealth into the Queen's closet. (Would Lethington be likely to inform Elizabeth's Ambassador, if he did so?) Whilst there, he was nearly discovered by the Earl of Mar, and was smuggled away by the Maries "with much speed and alarm." Randolph says that he himself caught a glimpse of a strange visage which filled him full of suspicion, and goes on to give a detailed account of the priest's mission, who was directed to use his influence to keep the Queen steadfast in her religion, so at least the Secretary informed him, and adds that he believed there was more in this matter than he or Lethington were permitted to see. From what we know of William Maitland of Lethington, nothing is less likely than that he would discuss such an incident with the English Ambassador, and particularly his own part in it! We can imagine the source of the information readily enough, and that Lethington's name is merely a cover for a much more intimate, and in the circumstances, much more likely, whisperer of secrets.

On the 11th of August Mary left Holyrood-house with a considerable body of her attendants on horseback, for Linlithgow, where she was to rest on the first night of her State progress, and where her Council and the rest of her personal train were to join her on the morrow, thence on to Stirling and so into the Highlands.

Of made roads there were none; the country was far more remote than it is to-day, and we get a good idea of its difficulties and indeed its dangers, in a letter from Cecil's ubiquitous correspondent[1] when he says:

"From Stirling she taketh her journey as far north as Inverness, the farthest part of Moray, a terrible journey both for horse and man, the countries are so poor and the victuals so scarce. It is her will that I should attend upon her. It is thought it will be a journey for her of two months or more."

To reach Inverness she must travel by way of Aberdeen, within a few short miles of Strathbogie, the Earl of Huntly's principal stronghold, where she had, at first, expressed her intention to stay for a few days, but had been persuaded by Mar that to do so in the light of recent events and Findlater's open defiance —amounting almost to rebellion—would be construed as a weakness, and the idea must be abandoned. She therefore decided to make the little hamlet of Old Aberdeen her resting-place instead.

"Old" Aberdeen must not be confused with the present granite city; it then consisted of little more than a Bishop's palace, a college "with fifteen or sixteen scholars," and appears to have been notorious for its lack of beds, for we find that Randolph and Maitland had to sleep together in one bed! Misfortune makes strange bedfellows indeed! How far it was from the confines of the new town is not apparent, but it was evidently some little way, and the present city was in some sort of process of formation, for we read that on her return the Queen "arrived at Old

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 10th August 1562.

Aberdeen preparatory to her public entry to the New Town." So there must then have been a clear line of demarcation between the two.

At Stirling Mary was received with booming cannons from the Castle. At Perth, the "fair City" which had lost its status as the capital of the Kingdom by the foul murder of James I. within its boundaries, the Royal army was augmented by additional levies called up at the Queen's command, and we hear, for the first time, of a body of "hackbutters," or soldiers armed with the new lethal weapon the "harquebuss," forerunner of the firelock and the musket.

Sweeping along by the glorious waters of the Tay, across the "North Inch," which had seen a desperate battle between two of the fiercest of the Highland Clans in King Robert's days, loud acclamations greeted the young Queen on her progress.

As far as Perth the roads were fairly good for horses, though somewhat rough and rocky for any conveyance on wheels.

Thence by mountain and glen, by "bank, brook, and scaur," the strongly guarded little cavalcade approached the wide territories of the Earl of Huntly; a cluster of shielings and bothies nestling near to the stronghold of Strathbogie, formed the little hamlet of Old Aberdeen.

It was a brave display of feudal pageantry which marked the Queen's progress as she approached the town where she was to lodge for the night. The litters and the horses attached to them which bore the Queen and her ladies at such times as they were able to use them, or preferred them to the palfreys, were bright with

blue and gold, the multicoloured suits of the gentlemen in attendance, and the damascened armour of the Nobles in the Queen's train, the scarlet pennons on the lances of the escort, and the Royal Standard proudly borne at the head of the cavalcade must have made a glittering picture.

Old Huntly, gallant old "Cock o' the North," approached to pay his homage and, as he hoped, to make his peace with his Sovereign and conduct her to his own dwelling, as had been the immemorial custom between his predecessors and hers, whenever the latter made a "progress" through the Highlands.

Randolph, of course, gives an account of the meeting:[1]

"The Earl of Huntly is here, not well in his Prince's favour, and how well that man doth deserve, your honour well knoweth from his upright dealing with all men. The Queen will not grant that she will go into his house, though it be within three miles of her way and the fairest in the country. That purpose of hers I know will be broken for so her Council findeth it expedient."

Here we see my Lord of Mar again; not a single hesitation in his ruthless purpose!

And so the Sovereign passed on, without the promised visit to Strathbogie "where provision had been made for her," leaving Huntly disconsolate and fearsome, so far as it was possible for the fierce old warrior to know fear, and quite unable to understand wherein he had so grievously offended. He, the Chancellor of Scotland, the one staunch Catholic who

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 31st August 1562.

felt that he might rely on the friendship and forbearance of the Catholic Queen!

Mary's progress continued by Elgin and Kinloss to Inverness, where she arrived on the evening of 11th September 1562.

Mar now judged his chief object accomplished and at Tarnaway, the principal seat in the Earldom of Moray, at a Council apparently specially held for the purpose, he produced his grant under the privy seal and thereafter assumed the title of Earl of Moray.

Randolph's letter[1] from Spynie, the residence of the Bishop of Moray, is very illuminating on this object of the ambitious minister and of the way in which Huntly and Strathbogie were slighted. He appears to have been practically the last visitor of note to the old "Cock o' the North," and wrote of his visit:

"At the Queen's coming northward passing within four miles of Huntly's castle, after that he could by no entreaty cause the Queen to come into his house, he desired her to give leave unto Lord Argyll to bring me thither where we were two nights."

He speaks highly of the old Earl and in a later paragraph says:

"It may please your honour to know that the Queen hath given the Earldom of Moray to the Earl of Mar. It is both more honourable and *greater in profit* than the other."

At Inverness the Queen found the Castle closed against her. It was held by the Sheriff of Inverness, the Lord Gordon, under a grant of 1556, and garrisoned

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 18th September 1562.

for him by Alexander Gordon, who refused to admit the Royal party without orders from his chief.

Moray summoned the Castle to surrender and brought up a local troop to subdue it. Alexander Gordon then surrendered at discretion to superior forces, and was promptly hanged on his own gateway, his head being placed over the Keep. There was no shadow of justice for this act of brutality against a man who was but doing his obvious duty in refusing to surrender his charge, until he had orders so to do.

Meanwhile Huntly had followed the Queen to Kinloss Abbey, again to plead his cause, and hearing there of the summons to surrender the Castle, sent orders by express to do so, but his messenger was too late, having found the Governor hanged; and Huntly returned to Strathbogie.

On 15th September Mary commenced her return journey to Edinburgh, and Moray, continuing to increase her anger against Huntly, prepared her for his last act of vindictive hate, by demanding the impeachment of the Chancellor for treason!

It is all rather a mystery how she could accept such treacherous ill-advice, but it shows how insidiously and successfully Mar had worked to incense Mary against her one honest adherent, who could not be held even morally responsible for the venial fault of Findlater; certainly whatever fault there was on old Huntly's part never deserved a tithe of the retribution that befell him.

Probably Chalmers in his indictment of Mar's greed and treachery[1] gives us the best explanation that

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., pp. 91 *et seq.*

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carried the whole miserable affair to its
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undeserved, though we know that by this time she was entirely under the domination of her ruthless brother, and relied upon him for advice in her every action.

It is a poor excuse but it is eloquent of the *truth*, that events which followed, that the lies, the murders, the whole gamut of instruments of the Queen's downfall, were the tools and weapons of the Queen's Chief Minister against his Sovereign, and that the guilt throughout was his, and not that of Mary herself.

I will quote, as briefly as may be, from Chalmers's far-sighted indictment:

"This leads to enquiry as to what led the Queen to undertake such a journey, with her Minister against Huntly. It was given out that Huntly intended to seize her person. She might have known that Huntly was one of her chief nobles and she ought to have understood distinctly that he was too experienced a statesman to entertain such dangerous follies. She ought to have known (how could she imagine it, poor woman?) that her ministers were men capable of asserting any falsehood in pursuit of their objects. She must have known, *unless the transaction was grossly mis-stated to her*, that the scuffle in Edinburgh was a mere breach of the peace. If she was told by her Minister that the affairs of the northern shires were unsettled and it was necessary for her government that

fore should go to settle them, this implied that Courts of Justice were to be held, but there is no trace of judicial proceedings. There was no disturbance at Inverness until the Queen and her Minister, coming there, made forcible entry into the Castle without legal proceeding and hanged the Governor, not for acting wrong but for acting right. In favour of the Queen we may suppose that she may have been unconscious of the purpose of her mission, but the Minister knew that he could make no impression upon Huntly by any legal proceeding and he was induced to bring the Queen's person, name, and authority, to justify violence and wrong, unwarrantableness and illegality. If the Queen was overpowered by the vice and villandy of her minion, then must the necessity which forced her defend her.

"But what shall we say to the deliberate resolution adopted by the Queen and her ministers to use force and fraud for the utter subversion of the House of Huntly? The Queen could not see that her name, her authority, and her person were prostituted to the vilest purposes of the most odious policy.

"All the great objects of the northern tour being accomplished by giving possession of Moray to Mar, what was the result? Her whole journey was founded in imposture and conducted by fraudulence and force for the benefit of her minion. Being egregiously imposed upon by a thousand of his fictions and falsehoods she was at once made the victim of his ambition and the instrument of his murders."

These are strong words of a hundred and twenty years ago, but they stand crystal clear to-day in their revelation of the underlying factor which was causing the utter ruin of Mary Queen of Scots. I have given extracts only from four pages of a remarkably enlightened

presentation of the case against Mar, and I rest content with that case, to assert that the man who could so plot to entangle in suspicious circumstances, and to remove the Lord High Chancellor of Scotland for his own aggrandisement, could and did plot similarly to entangle and remove Darnley and his Queen for the same base reason.

CHAPTER V

RUIN OF THE HOUSE OF GORDON

The Queen's return to her capital was unhurried and by easy stages. She spent two days and nights at Spynie Castle, the palace of the Bishops of Moray, before she crossed the Spey at Fochabers and rested at Cullen. Her retinue is stated by Randolph to have consisted of two thousand Highlanders and about a thousand of her original escort, so that on passing into the Huntly territories she had a guard of some three thousand men.

It is evident that her captains confidently expected the passage of the Spey to be disputed, and there appears little doubt that Moray hoped for some such overt act on the part of the proud Huntly to provide the excuse for extremities, but not even the grievous wrongs he had suffered could yet goad the Chancellor of Scotland to such treason as to appear in arms against his Sovereign, and we are told that "not a Gordon was to be seen"; but if the old Earl was not yet to be drawn, the Queen was to suffer another set-back at Findlater Castle, which she ordered to be summoned by sound of trumpet. This, of course, was the stronghold of the errant Sir John Gordon, and the custodian, undeterred by the fate of his fellow at Inverness Castle, refused to surrender his charge

without orders from his master, who was still in hiding in Badenoch.

Randolph wrote that the reduction of the Castle could not be effected without cannon, and so the Queen's force had to leave a hostile fortress in their rear.

At this time Huntly remained quietly at Strathbogie, and Moray appears to have remained in his new house at Tarnaway; leaving, as always, the carrying out of his vindictive schemes to others. The Queen reached Aberdeen on 22nd September, and was received in all honour and respect in spite of the fact that the inhabitants were Gordon's vassals; Randolph reports:

"They presented her with a cup of silver, double gilt, well wrought, with 500 crowns in it: wine, coals and wax were sent in, as much as will serve her while she remains here. Her determination is to remain forty days, within what time she trusteth to put this country in good quietness."[1]

Randolph also gives frequent reports of the consultations of her advisers during those forty days, saying that they were held to determine how to reform the country and make it obedient to her, and how at length it was determined—

"to begin at the head and make an example of the Lord High Chancellor of Scotland, so that smaller men might be more easily reformed from their evil ways."

But where was the need? The country was perfectly quiet, and was paying every possible honour to the Queen; Huntly himself had made repeated attempts to placate his offended Sovereign, and had

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 24th September 1562.

been repulsed. He had even sent her the keys of his son's summoned house of Findlater, which her Council insisted that she should decline, and the Castle, with a smaller house, was reduced by cannon, which had now been brought up for the purpose.

The Council had also decided that the Earl of Huntly must submit himself to the Queen, and deliver up his rebellious son, Sir John Gordon of Findlater, or they would use such force against him "as utterly to subvert his house for ever."[1]

Strathbogie was therefore invested with all warlike form, but the Countess of Huntly at once threw open the doors and invited the besiegers to take possession. The Earl had escaped into the country and was at some distance.

We see next, from the immediate proceedings of the Council, how determined the Ministers were to effect the final and utter ruin of the Chancellor.

On 15th October, Huntly was declared to be in rebellion against his Sovereign if he did not appear before her to answer the charges against him *on the following day!* This was clearly an utter impossibility, as he could not even know of the Council's decree in the time; consequently the order was not obeyed, and a decree of outlawry was pronounced against him on 16th October 1562.[2]

On the 20th, Lady Huntly waited on the Queen to protest her husband's innocence, and ask for clemency, but she was not permitted even to approach the Court, and a subsequent offer of the Earl "to enter into ward

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 30th September 1562.
[2] Keith, p. 226.

until his cause could be tried by the whole nobility" was contemptuously refused. The unfortunate Chief now saw that nothing could save him from the vindictiveness of his enemy, and at last, goaded to despair, he committed the supreme act of folly to which Moray had, from the first, intended to force him. He placed himself at the head of five hundred of his clansmen, and towards the end of October advanced into his own country.

Meanwhile Moray had left his house at Tarnaway and rejoined the Queen, and on 28th October he marched out from Aberdeen with two thousand men to give battle to his enemy.

The Earl of Atholl, with five hundred men, held the flat country between the castle and the sea at Aberdeen, twelve miles away. The Earl of Morton, with another five hundred men, cut off any prospect of reinforcements to the rebels from the country around Findlater, and the main army soon had Huntly's little force surrounded. The Earl, however, was encamped in strength on Corriechie hill, a mile or two to the west of his stronghold, and his son, Sir John Gordon, the quarrelsome cause of his father's ruin, had seized Strathbogie Castle and kept the flag flying in the face of all Scotland.

The Queen and her ladies were lodged in Aberdeen, secure behind Atholl's protecting force. The first clash came when a small party was sent to demand the surrender of the Castle; they fell into an ambuscade commanded by John Gordon in person, and were cut off to a man. That action sealed the Gordon's doom.

Thoroughly scared now, as the dull boom of the cannon reached his camp at Corriechie, a sound hitherto unheard in the Highlands and a terrifying innovation, Huntly sent repeated pleas for mercy to the Queen, but his emissaries were turned back without reaching the presence. His men deserted by night in dozens, until at length Moray felt that he held his enemy in the hollow of his hand, and moved against him with nearly five hundred horse and a like number of mercenaries, armed with that other new and deadly weapon, the harquebuss.

Huntly, however, was strongly placed on the hill, and it took time to dislodge him, though his entire force now numbered little more than four hundred. Slowly, however, the harquebusses did their deadly work, and the Gordons were forced down from their vantage ground into the marshes between the hill and the little Corriechie burn.

A word from Moray let loose his pikemen and there was no withstanding their charge; through and through the disordered, kilted ranks they drove like a wedge; twice the Gordon banner dropped from a dying hand, to be caught up again and held aloft by another doomed clansman.

In the mêlée Huntly was borne to the ground and seized; Randolph, who saw his body, says that he was placed on horseback before his captor, but that—

"he suddenly falleth from his horse, starke dead without word that he ever spake after that he was set upon horseback."[1]

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 28th October 1562.

Randolph adds that he was taken "without either blow or stroke" but other accounts[1] say that he was either suffocated by the weight of his armour, or slain by the sword.

John Gordon of Findlater, and his younger brother Adam Gordon, were also taken, and one hundred and twenty of his small force were slain. Sir John Gordon was immediately executed, but even after this the Council sat to try the Gordons. To try the dead old man, standing upright in his coffin in the Parliament House in Edinburgh, in sight of his peers, heaping indignity upon one who, however reckless and foolish in his life, never abated one jot of the dignity he could not now defend! They judged him traitor, as he undoubtedly was at the end, but driven to his treason by a greater traitor, Moray, for his own purpose, and they would have executed a traitor's doom upon him; would have cut off the dead head and placed it on a spike above the Edinburgh Castle gate, and plucked out the dead heart; would have disembowelled him and hung the four quarters of him over the Netherbow Port, and the West Port, and the North Port, and the Gallowgate, if they could! But the Queen would have none of it, and ordered him to have a decent burial—and as yet even Moray dared not openly disobey her.

He had had his way with the young man though, and Gordon of Findlater had died the traitor's death, drawn to the gallows on a hurdle, with all the horrible vengeance that they would have wreaked upon his father. Adam Gordon was also condemned, but was personally pardoned by the Queen in spite of Moray's protest.

[1] Hollinshead, p. 380, and Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 167.

Lord Gordon, the eldest son, had all this time been living quietly with his newly wedded wife, at the house of his father-in-law, the Duke of Châtelherault. He had never been in arms, but the Duke was now ordered to surrender him also, as being guilty of treason, and he was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle. The whole of the estates of the family, so recently the most powerful in Scotland, were forfeited to the Crown, as also was the title, and the ruin of the Gordons was complete.

Moray's purpose accomplished, the Court set out from Aberdeen on 5th November, with the Queen, we may well believe, somewhat bewildered and saddened at the tragic conclusion to her Northern "progress" which she had undertaken in pleasurable anticipation and highness of spirits; she travelled very leisurely by way of Dunnottar Castle, Montrose, and Dundee, thence by Perth and Stirling to Edinburgh, where she arrived on the 21st, the whole expedition having taken close upon four months, or almost twice the time that was originally suggested and intended.

Mary returned to a political situation that caused her considerable personal sorrow and difficulty. War had broken out between England and France, the two countries to which she was closely allied both in blood and policy, and her situation was a somewhat dangerous one. Her relatives of the House of Guise were involved in enterprises which she could not condone, and she was, in fact, bound by treaty to oppose them, but she generously endeavoured to find excuses for them in her conversations with Randolph.

Mary's troubles were aggravated by illness which kept her in bed for a week. It is interesting in the

twentieth century, when we imagine that we are assailed with new epidemics, to read in Chalmers[1] that she "was taken ill of a disease which would now (one hundred and twenty years ago!) be called *influenza*," and Randolph's description of the malady[2] as it raged in 1562, might almost be an account of any of the more serious epidemics of that scourge, which have been prevalent in recent years:

"Immediately upon the Queen's arrival here, she fell aquainted with a newe disease that is common in this towne, called here the new acquaintance which passed also through the whole Courte, neither sparing Lorde, ladye, now damoysell, not so much as either Frenche or Englishe. It is a payne in their heades that have it, and a soreness in their stomackes with a great coughe; it remayneth with some longer, with others shorter tyme, as it findeth apt bodies for the nature of the disease. The Queen kept her bed six days: there is no appearance of danger, nor maynie that die of the disease except foure old folkes. My L. of Murraye is now presentlye in it, the L. of Lethington hathe had it; and I am ashamed to saye that I have bene free of it seeinge that it seeketh acquaintance in all mens handes."

After her indisposition the Christmas of 1562 was spent quietly enough at Holyrood, but early in February news reached the Court of a temporary restoration of peace between England and France, and in her delight Mary at once threw aside her melancholy and celebrated the occasion in a manner which once more brought down fresh trouble upon her.

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 99.

[2] MS. letter, Cotton Library, Randolph to Cecil, 30th November 1562.

Masques and dances, feasting and merry-making of all kinds followed each hard on the heels of another. John Knox and his Calvinistic brethren broke out into fresh tirades at the extravagant pleasures of the Court. Knox, on the occasion of a ball at Holyrood, preached an envenomed sermon against the "dancing and flinging of French fillocks," and even went so far as to pray that God would send the Queen a short life! She ordered him to be brought before her to answer for the personal attack, and reproached him for his bitterness towards his Queen.

The Reformer answered her, without attempting to deny the reports she had heard:

"Madam, I doubt not that it came to the ears of Herod that our Master, Jesus Christ, called him a fox! But the reporters told him not how odious a thing it was before God to murder an innocent, which he had lately done, causing to behead John the Baptist to reward the dancing of an harlot's daughter * * * And of dancing, Madam, I have said that it is termed the gesture rather of those who are mad and in frenzy than of sober men and women. Yet I do not utterly condemn it, provided that two vices be avoided; the former that the principal vocation of those that use the exercise be not neglected for the pleasure of dancing, and the second that they dance not as the Philistines, for the pleasure that they take in the displeasure of God's people, for if they do these things they shall receive the reward of dancers, and that will be to drink in Hell!"[1]

And so the two implacable opponents parted, Mary the last *solus* Queen of Scots, and save one, the last

[1] *History of the Reformation*, pp. 334, 335.

Catholic monarch to sit on the throne of either Kingdom, representing the old faith and the old standard of ideas, and Knox the Reformer, narrow, bigoted and ruthless, but illustrating the dawning of the new thought, the Protestant faith, and the freedom that was to make Scotland and England great in the years to come; but there were bloody years yet to pass ere the dried and bitter seed of the Reformer's zeal was to bear the blossom and fruit of Freedom and Peace to both countries.

And now, borne on the wings of the peace with France, came a bird of ill-omen; the chattering, mincing, thieving French poet, Monsieur de Châtelard, hounded from Scotland with the whips of Mary's scorn, who crept back into her favour, his fault forgotten in the new softness of her happiness at the peace which had come to her beloved France.

The Court was at Burntisland, and there were frequent comings and goings between that place and St Andrews. After one such journey, when the Queen had been received and fêted by the Archbishop, she returned late in the evening to her lodging and at once expressed her desire to retire for the night. Following a brief discussion on matters of State with Lethington and Moray in her ante-room, she bade them a fatigued "good-night" and entered her chamber. Her Maries were in the act of disrobing her, when the door of her little private Chapel opened slightly, and the simpering face of the infatuated Châtelard appeared in the opening. Mary Fleming saw the intruder first, and her shrill cries brought Moray and Lethington hasting in from the ante-room, to be faced with a curious tableau.

A white virginal Queen, her burning face caused more by anger than by embarrassment, with her shapely legs and feet bare as she stood on the sheepskin, her glorious hair unbound and rippling to her waist, her hazel eyes a very flame of scorn, and her Maries gathered round her and wrapping her hastily in her doffed garments. On his knees before her, now a shivering supplicant grovelling for mercy, where a presumptuous would-be lover and doting fool had flung himself in his mad folly, was Châtelard!

Speaking rapidly in French, Mary lashed him with her scorn and fury; then turning to her brother she besought him frantically to kill the intruder on the spot.

But Moray, brother of the twice insulted woman though he was, was not one personally to perform any act of chivalry or punishment when he could pass on the work to another, and he contented himself with handing the culprit over to the Captain of the Guard. There is no evidence that he had any more sinister motive, but the fact is not to be ignored that he took such steps as must make the whole miserable affair public, and put yet another weapon into the hands of the Queen's enemies, for he could not be unaware that her former freedom with Châtelard in the masque and dance previously described, had brought down the denunciations of Knox and the scandal of the "unco' guid" upon her head.

It would have been reasonable enough in Moray to avenge his sister's honour in other ways, and Châtelard could quite easily have been dealt with by the Guard if he were not himself ready to obey

her frenzied behest. Instead he took the course which must give the whole incident the widest publicity.

He ordered Châtelard into ward, sent to Edinburgh for the Chancellor, Morton, also the Lord Justice Clerk, and other members of the Council sufficient to give the wretched man almost a State trial. The Court sat at St Andrews and Châtelard was condemned. Two days later, on 22nd February, he suffered for his crime at the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh, where so many better men were yet to die. It is said[1] that on the scaffold he produced a volume of Ronsard and gaily read that poet's "Hymn to Death" in preference to any religious work.

For the next six or eight months the Queen seems to have led a healthy life, chiefly at St Andrews and Falkland, seldom at her capital. We read much of her activity, her hawking, once with John Knox as her companion (an incongruous pair at such a sport!), and during all this time there is little mention of Moray, who doubtless considered it wise to lie low for a time, after the complete realisation of his ambition in the matter of his Earldom.

It is noted that "he acted as Dictator" and in addition to his Earldom of Moray with its vast possessions, he acquired the office of Sheriff of Inverness and its Castle, and became lord over Ross, Sutherland and Caithness, of which Lord Gordon, old Huntly's dispossessed heir, was the rightful heritor. James Ogilvie conveyed to him the lands of Strathearn and Cardel by the Queen's order, in place of the

[1] Brantôme, vol. ii., p. 332.

despoiled lands of Findlater and Deskford, latterly in the possession of the executed Sir John Gordon of Findlater.

So the Earl of Moray had, one would think, secured quite sufficient to keep him quiet—for a time.

CHAPTER VI

"YOUNG LOCHINVAR" RIDES NORTH

DURING the summer which followed (1563) fresh troubles arose with Knox and his Presbyterian followers. Not only had they protested against the laxity with which decrees forbidding the celebration of the Mass were being administered, and had insisted on the prosecution and imprisonment of many of the Catholic clergy, the Archbishop of St Andrews amongst them, but, says Chalmers:[1]

"A tyranny was introduced into her kingdom and her laws set at nought, for there was then no law in Scotland to support such prosecution. The proceedings of the convention of 1560 were not legal till they were legitimised by the Parliament of December 1567."

The Presbyterians formally threatened the Roman clergy that—

"thenceforth they would neither complain to Queen or Council but would themselves with their own hands execute upon idolaters the punishments contained in God's word."[2]

Nor was this all; intolerant as they showed themselves to be against Catholics, they were scarcely less

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 104.
[2] *History of the Reformation*, p. 352.

so against the Church of England, for when rumours reached them that Elizabeth was recommending Mary's marriage to a nobleman of her own choosing, with a bond of amity between the two Kingdoms as a result, they were equally alarmed, indeed

"it was really more tolerable for them to see their Royal Mistress a confirmed Papist and the enemy of England than the friend and convert of Elizabeth to the Church of England."[1]

The Queen of Scots was indeed in a difficult position. Every step she took was misrepresented, and her simplest actions were construed into wanton pleasures.

She summoned her Parliament and attended it with a dignity and a brilliance which pleased her subjects; she was supported by her hereditary peers, with full regalia, and her coronation took place in a glittering assembly. This, however, only brought upon her further denunciations from Knox, and an endeavour to introduce ordinances against extravagance of dress, which soured and reproved the enthusiasm of the populace, and was only frustrated by the powerful interference of Moray himself, who threatened Knox that if he persisted in carrying reforms with too high a hand the Queen would hold no parliaments at all.

The result of Moray's interference was an estrangement between him and Knox that lasted a year and a half.[2] But nothing could subjugate the fiercely intolerant spirit of the Reformer; nothing that the Queen or Moray, or the Parliament could do, short of

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 172.
History of the Reformation, p. 357.

pandering to his imperious will, even in matters which were no concern of his or in any way within his province, could find favour in his sight, and hence in a sermon before the nobility, he even dared to dictate State policy and the Queen's marriage from the pulpit:[1]

"Now my Lords, to put an end to all I hear of the Queen's marriage. Dukes, brethren to Emperors and Kings, strive all for the best gain. But this, my Lords, will I say—note the day and bear witness hereafter—whenever the nobility of Scotland who profess the Lord Jesus, consent that an infidel (and all papists are infidels) shall be head to our Sovereign, ye do as far as in you lieth to banish Christ Jesus from this realm and to bring God's vengeance on the Country."

Catholics and Protestants alike were appalled at such unlicensed words, and in any other country but Scotland, with any other monarch but Mary Stuart, his freedom, if not his life, would have paid the penalty of such impertinent interference in affairs of State by a mere subject, however he might presume upon his clerical status. Instead he was merely summoned to the Queen's presence, and upbraided with his ingratitude, reminded that she had sought his friendship and listened to his severest censures with humility, told he had nothing to do with her marriage, and warned to take heed of her displeasure.

Knox answered in such intolerant words that he himself says that "Papists and Protestants were both offended," and he was shunned by all the nobles of both persuasions, yet the Queen "never took any

[1] *History of the Reformation*, p. 359.

further notice of his officious and uncalled-for interference with her marriage,"[1] but merely "requested him to go home"! Where is the vindictive and murderous spirit that was later fastened upon her character? She could quite easily have charged him with treason had she then wished, and none could have said that he had not deserved the charge.

Finding that his chief supporter in the Council, Moray, had failed him, Knox next attempted to suborn Elizabeth and Cecil to his purpose, and in October wrote to the English Secretary of State a letter in which he pointed out his fears of the consequence of the Queen's marriage with a foreign prince of her own faith.[2]

Whether this was the cause of the extraordinary step next taken by the English Queen or not, cannot be stated with any certainty, but the fact remains that Elizabeth informed her Council of her intention to propose her own favourite and alleged paramour, Lord Robert Dudley, as a prospective husband for the Queen of Scots, and Randolph was instructed to sound Moray and Lethington as to the likelihood of such a proposal being acceptable to Mary. Randolph was in a position of considerable difficulty, for he was not permitted to divulge the name of the intended bridegroom;—it is not surprising, under these circumstances, that the negotiations with Moray and Lethington dragged on for some months, but at last Elizabeth seems to have feared that a marriage less in accordance with her own policy would probably take place,

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 175.

[2] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Knox to Cecil, 6th October 1563.

withdrew the embargo on Dudley's name, and instructed Randolph more directly to lay the project before Mary in person.

At the end of March, therefore, Randolph presented himself to the Queen, and very tactfully disclosed his commission from his own Sovereign, to ascertain her "dear sister's views" on a project she had in mind, to propose the hand of my Lord Robert Dudley as a husband for the Queen of Scots! The Queen was astounded, and in her reply, carefully chosen as were the words, she showed her displeasure.

"Your own Mistress, sir," she answered him, "hath been somewhat longer of deciding the subject of my marriage than I have been, and you know she hath counselled me to have regard to three points, whereof the special one was honour! Now, think you, Master Randolph, that it will be honourable for me to imbase my state and marry one of her subjects? Is this conformable to her promise to use me as her sister or her daughter, to advise me to marry my Lord Robert —to ally myself with her own subject?

"What is my assurance of this? What if the Queen your mistress should marry herself and have children? What have I then gotten? And though I am willing not to mistrust your mistress, the adventure is too great."[1]

She had consulted with Moray and Lethington, who advised that if Elizabeth would acknowledge her right of succession to the Crown of England, and would confirm it by an Act of the English Parliament, settling the crown upon the children of Mary and Lord Robert Dudley, they would have no reason to

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 30th March 1564.

object to the match. With this Randolph was perforce to be contented, and in the letter above quoted, he wrote to the English Secretary of State, that he had "found the task of persuading the Queen of Scots to marry any man under the rank of Prince, both difficult and dangerous, and that even if Her Majesty had been ready to forfeit her royal dignity and listen to the proposal, it was very questionable whether Queen Elizabeth herself would be willing to depart from one who had long been considered to be devoted to her."

That Mary realised the insult in the suggestion is probable. Robert Dudley was known to be high in the English Queen's favour, and generally believed to be her lover, and it is equally probable that Mary felt quite certain of Queen Elizabeth's dissimulation, that she would never willingly part with her favourite to become the husband of the Queen of Scots, and therefore that the suggestion was mere subterfuge. This would appear to underlie Randolph's remarks to Cecil.

Elizabeth's duplicity and double dealing is clearly disclosed by another incident about this time, in the circumstances of Mary's recall of the attainted Earl of Lennox.

That powerful nobleman had been prominent in the many conspiracies to obtain possession of the young Princess and the control of affairs in Mary's infancy, and had indeed, at one time, forcibly taken possession of the Queen's person. A quarrel with Cardinal Beaton had, however, forced his hand, and he had allied himself with Henry VIII. of England, and acknowledged that monarch as "Protector of the Realm of Scotland,"

promising to deliver the young Queen and the Scottish fortresses into Henry's hands.

For this treason Lennox eventually had to fly from Scotland and take refuge in England, where he had married the Lady Margaret Douglas, niece of the King, an alliance which had been promised him as a reward for his perfidy to his own country.

He was guilty of an invasion of Scotland under the Protector, in the reign of Edward VI., and had enjoyed much favour at the English Court, until Elizabeth in March 1562, committed the Earl and his Countess to the Tower, under the belief that he was plotting, as he even then quite probably was, to marry his son Henry, Lord Darnley, to the Queen of Scots, and to re-establish the Papal dominion in Scotland. Mary had approved his imprisonment, denounced his conduct, and scorned the suggestion that she would unite herself with any of such a traitor race.

In June 1563, however, Elizabeth wrote personally to Mary[1] informing her of her intention to release the Earl from the Tower, and to permit his return to Scotland, bespeaking the grace and forgiveness of his Sovereign, and asking her to receive him with favour. Mary had apparently agreed at the time, but nothing further had transpired for nearly a year, when Mary, under the Great Seal in May 1564, consented to the return of the Earl, notwithstanding the fact that he was still a forfeited outlaw who could not be reinstated without Act of Parliament.

So soon as Knox heard of the proposed return of the Earl, a man of known Catholic sympathies, he wrote

[1] Draft of the letter in State Paper Office, 16th June 1563.

to England a strong and urgent letter of protest, and Elizabeth, always scheming anew, thereupon executed a complete *volte-face*, and decided to withdraw her request for the recall of Lennox. Sir James Melvil had been dispatched to her by Mary with a conciliatory but definite refusal of the project of the Robert Dudley marriage, and had been present at the installation of Lord Robert Dudley as Earl of Leicester, doubtless as a solace for his disappointment at the loss of the throne of Scotland!

Melvil gives an amusing account of his delicate mission in refusing the honour (!) of the proposed alliance to the prospective bridegroom:[1]

"The next day my Lord Leicester desired me to go down the river with him in his barge to London. He had in his company Sir Henry Sidney. By the way my Lord entered into familiar discourse with me and desired to know what my Queen thought of him and the marriage which Mr Randolph proposed. Whereunto I answered, very coldly, as I had been by my Queen commanded. Then he began to purge himself of so proud a pretension as to marry so great a Queen; insisting that the intention of that proposal of marriage proceeded from Mr Cecil, his secret enemy. 'For if I,' said he, 'should have appeared desirous of that marriage I should have offended both the Queens and lost their favour.'"

At Leicester's installation, a magnificent ceremony, Melvil met Henry, Lord Darnley, the eldest son of the banished Earl of Lennox, for the first time; as the nearest Prince of the Blood Royal he stood next the throne during the investiture, Elizabeth had called him

[1] *Melvil's Memoirs*, p. 51.

"yonder long lad," and asked Melvil how he liked him. Melvil's report upon him is not very illuminating as a description:

"My answer was that no woman of spirit would make choice of such a man, who was more like a woman than a man, for he was very lusty, beardless, and lady-faced."

It is true he states that this was merely to allay suspicion that Mary would be likely to marry him, and that he had a secret commission from Mary to bring Darnley into Scotland to visit his father, doubtless as a counterblast to the iniquitous Dudley proposal.[1]

Elizabeth, still pretending to foster the suggested marriage to her own subject, Leicester, suddenly and privately wrote to Mary, suggesting that she should retract her pardon of the Earl of Lennox as if of her own accord, and at the same time Cecil wrote to both Moray and Lethington at her command to the same effect, only to be severely snubbed by both his Scottish correspondents, and lectured for his inconsistency and that of the Queen of England.

Mary herself was furious at the suggestion, and replied to the Queen so forcibly that Melvil says Elizabeth was much offended. However, she saw that it was useless further to oppose the pardon, and she withdrew her opposition and took extraordinary means to expunge all trace of it from the records, commanding Lethington to recover and return her own letter to Mary, with Cecil's letter to himself suggesting it, and this was done.

[1] *Melvil's Memoirs*, p. 122.

In September the Earl of Lennox arrived in Edinburgh and had a gracious reception. He dismounted at Holyrood-house and was at once conducted to the Royal presence, with scarcely time allowed to remove his travelling boots.

Mary immediately wrote to Elizabeth an account of the Earl's return in which she emphasised the fact that she had acted entirely from anxiety to show deference to her good sister's request, and that she had not only already given the Earl some proof of her goodwill, but intended fully to restore him to his old titles and allow him to enjoy all the privileges of a subject of his native country.[1] These promises were fulfilled to the letter at a Parliament held in Edinburgh in the following December, when his attainder was removed and his estates and honours restored, and when the Queen in person informed her Parliament that:

"One of the chief causes which had moved her to replace this baron in his former power and station, was the earnest suit of the Queen, her good sister of England."[2]

All this was, of course, merely a prelude to the return of his son, Darnley, the heir-presumptive both to Elizabeth and, after his own mother, to Mary should they die childless, and in the following February of 1565 Darnley set out, ostensibly to visit his father, in reality with the ambitious hope of marrying his beautiful cousin, Mary of Scotland, and so inevitably to pave the way to the crown of both Kingdoms.

Now the plot began to thicken indeed!

[1] Letter in State Paper Office, Mary to Elizabeth, 28th September 1564.
[2] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 15th December 1564.

Moray was scheming and plotting to forward the Leicester marriage, notwithstanding his rebuke to Cecil. Well he knew that his own hope of supreme power would fade into nothingness should his sister marry a Prince and a Catholic, but there was still a chance in the event of such a misalliance as with an Englishman, and a Protestant of comparatively small importance.

Mary was reported, by Randolph in his letter to Elizabeth in person, to be in good health, "quiet and merry, her time passed wholly in mirth, and living, in her own phrase, like any bourgeois-wife at St Andrews."[1] She now reiterated her willingness to marry whomsoever her sister of England wished, so long as the marriage was a suitable one, and Elizabeth was willing to acknowledge the fruit of it as her presumptive successor.

Elizabeth countered this later, by an unqualified refusal, through Randolph, of the conditions, and stated definitely that Mary must marry Leicester, if at all, "as a simple Earl, and trust to the after-munificence of the Queen of England."

Mary's thoughts were thus naturally turned to a match with Darnley which would provide her with both the gratification of a counter-stroke, and an improvement of her title to the English throne, already scarcely assailable.

Meantime other characters on this tragic stage were increasing in importance, and coming into the limelight. Unsavoury reports regarding the proposed Leicester

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., pp. 123-127, where the letter is given *in extenso*, 5th February 1564/5. Mary was then just twenty-two.

match had reached the French Court, and had been repeated to Mary by her relatives. She had reason to think that her French secretary, Raulet, had been gossiping, and she dismissed him. In his stead she appointed one of her servants, David Rizzio, a Milanese of some attainments, who speedily won her confidence and her regard.

At the same time James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, Mary's "proper man" in a conversation of nearly two years before, was released from a long imprisonment in England, sailed for France and joined the King's Guard. Florence MacCunn, in her *Mary Stuart*, describes him as "a penniless, swaggering adventurer, free in his talk, eager to pick up the coarse, loose gossip of the Guard Room."

Meanwhile, over the Border hills, pricking his way with such a train of attendants as became a Prince, Mary's fate came upon her in the person of Henry, Lord Darnley—"the young fool" of the historian, Elizabeth's "long lad," with the "lady-face":

"A comely Prince of a fair and large countenance, well exercised in martial pastimes upon horseback, as any Prince of that age."

But these traits were accompanied by a haughty, overweening bearing to his inferiors, and even to the Peers of Scotland immediately he crossed her borders. He was a drunken sot at times, a sensualist of the worst type always, and his word was utterly worthless. Yet to the harassed Queen with her host of unsuitable suitors, he seemed a heaven-sent God indeed.

Henry, Lord Darnley, and his brother, Charles Stewart, in 1562

From the picture at Windsor Castle
Reproduced by gracious permission of His Majesty the King

[*Face p.* 84

CHAPTER VII

A WEDDING IN HASTE

HENRY STEWART, LORD DARNLEY, was born in the year 1546, and therefore was only eighteen years of age at the time when, as narrated in the last chapter, he posted north to Scotland on an alleged visit to his father, but without doubt with the definite intention, fostered by his ambitious mother, of becoming a suitor for the matrimonial prize for which most of the eligible Princes of Europe were contending.

I have mentioned that Darnley was the son of the Earl of Lennox and his wife, the Lady Margaret Douglas; the latter being a daughter of Margaret Tudor, that sister of Henry VIII. who had married firstly James IV. of Scotland, and secondly, with somewhat indecent haste after the King's death at Flodden, Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus. The Lady Margaret Douglas, therefore, was a half-sister of Queen Mary's father, as well as a niece of Henry VIII., and first cousin to Queen Elizabeth; on these counts her son, Henry, Lord Darnley, was next heir, after Mary and his own mother, to the English throne, and following the aged Duke of Châtelherault in addition, the heir-presumptive to that of Scotland also.

Hence it may be assumed, that when Darnley's visit "to his father" was first projected, there were

not wanting many who gave to that visit the true significance, and Tytler remarks [1] "of Darnley's intended journey to Scotland many whispers now ran in the country."

It must be assumed, therefore, that Elizabeth had only consented to the journey as a last expedient to avoid having to part with Leicester, whose suit Lethington and Moray were now pressing with considerable warmth, until Elizabeth once and for all put an end to it by refusing to recognise Mary's claims to the English throne, and telling her, as has been stated, that she must wed Leicester, if at all, "as a simple Earl and trust to the after-munificence of the Queen of England."

Tytler trenchantly asks:

"Are we to wonder that when she (Mary) was awakened to the duplicity with which she had been treated; when in a moment the mask of pretended amity and affection, so long worn by the English Queen, fell to the ground, and the features of fraud, falsehood and selfishness came out in all their deformity, Mary recoiled with mortification and disgust? the reaction was immediate and violent; she had long submitted her opinion to others; she now determined to choose for herself." [2]

Consequently when Darnley arrived in Scotland, Mary's mind was predisposed to him as a most suitable husband before she had ever seen him. She was at Wemyss Castle on 13th February 1564/5, as the guest of the Earl of Moray when Darnley arrived in Edinburgh, and on hearing from his father that

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 184.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 190.

his first duty was to wait upon the Queen, the young Prince proceeded thither on the 16th.

Mary first met him in her privy parlour at Wemyss. She was garbed in white, with her train of attendants at a little distance; David Rizzio stood amongst her gentlemen—and could not recognise in him his slayer; Rizzio was obviously criticising the new arrival, and nodded his head in satisfaction as he spoke aside to Lethington. The Prince, too, was in white, with gold ornaments on his neck and breast; he halted in the doorway and bowed, advanced to arms' length of her, knelt, somewhat ungraciously, at her feet, and would have kissed her hand. Mary, however, raised him tenderly with a gracious "Welcome, cousin," and gave him her cheek. It was a meeting that touched the heart, and it was of course said to have been a case of "love at first sight"; if so it was as pitiable a proof of its fallacy as could well be needed!

From that moment the whole atmosphere of the inner coterie of the Court altered. The Maries were out of favour for their disapproval of Darnley; a disapproval which resulted from his own conduct. Moray was frankly jealous of the Prince and almost hostile. Lethington alone of her old set retained the Queen's favour and confidence, but she had a new adviser in David Rizzio and showered favours upon the wily Italian because he, trimming his sails to the new wind, favoured Darnley and counselled a speedy marriage.

Only one more night did the little Court remain in Wemyss, and on the morrow Mary journeyed to Edinburgh in company with her cousin. He was

lodged with the Earl of Moray—to that nobleman's ill-concealed disgust—while a great banquet and a ball was given in his honour at Holyrood-house.

In April, after some excesses in Edinburgh which, however, did not reach the Queen's ear, Darnley contracted measles, and his enforced idleness brought out an ill-temper and bullying irritability which knew no bounds, and earned him the cordial dislike of all who came in contact with him, save only the Queen. She could not be with him enough, and nursed him throughout the illness with the tenderest care, so much so that her good name suffered, and scandal reached the greedy ears of Queen Elizabeth in London.

Lethington had been sent to London once more, with a message to the English Court which Mary hoped would expedite Elizabeth's approval, and the marriage on which her heart was now set. Moray was an open opponent of the marriage and his influence with his sister and Queen was rapidly waning.

Lethington returned at the end of April with the English envoy, Throckmorton, bearing a message which was practically a refusal to countenance the marriage at all. Elizabeth demanded that Lennox and Darnley should be sent back to London; Mary refused to listen and retorted by creating Darnley Earl of Ross!

The events immediately following are somewhat obscure. Tytler states[1] that it was believed by many that Elizabeth had sent Darnley into Scotland with the deliberate intention to stir up dissensions against Mary's expected wish to marry a Catholic; undoubtedly Knox and his faction were bitter against the project,

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 192.

and we find Randolph reporting the people discontented, and advising Cecil that if his mistress

"felt herself disposed to raise factions in Scotland and embroil that country there was never a fitter time to carry her wishes into execution."[1]

Chalmers goes a good deal further than Tytler and says that[2] "a rebellion was incited in Scotland by Cecil's artifices and Elizabeth's money," but he gives no authority for such a strong charge.

Whatever the truth, Moray, with Argyll, appeared in Edinburgh on 1st May, with an army of five thousand horse, to hold a "law-day" against the Earl of Bothwell, recently returned from France. The Queen was much incensed against Bothwell for his licentious conduct, and ordered him to stand his trial for high treason on the old charge brought against him by the Earl of Arran three years before.

Bothwell naturally considered his life in danger with Moray's great following, and declined to appear, merely sending to protest his innocence, and to declare himself willing to stand his trial when the charge should be made quietly, without tumult or intimidation.

Mary, prejudiced against Bothwell as she was, nevertheless took strong exception to Moray's display of force, and intimated her displeasure to him. However, as was again and again to be proved to the very end of her active reign, she could not bear to be at enmity with him and besought his consent to her marriage. This he refused on the ground that it

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 15th April 1565.

[2] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 134.

would be inimical "to Christ's true religion," and he at once withdrew from the Court and entered into the familiar Scottish "band of friendship" (which was so often a bond of treason) with the Duke of Châtelherault, and the Earls of Argyll and Glencairn, against the Queen, her marriage, and Darnley.

Meanwhile Mary, on 15th May 1565, had formally intimated to her nobles at Stirling, her intention to marry Darnley, and the proposal was accepted without a dissentient voice.

Elizabeth next informed Randolph that she would give her support to Moray's action against the Queen's marriage—in other words she was prepared to support a subject against his own Sovereign—"so long as their efforts were directed to maintain the religion and to preserve the amity between the two Kingdoms."[1] Her action would not appear very likely so to preserve it!

Knox also joined forces with Moray after their eighteen months' estrangement and brought all the weight of Presbyterian opinion against the marriage and the "idolatry of the Mass"; he even went so far as to hold a convocation at which it was resolved to arm and to seize the weapons of those believed to be in favour of the marriage. The meeting also demanded the total abolition of the Mass, and sent a petition to the Queen at Perth on 1st July to this effect.

Tytler says "her conduct at this crisis is deserving of much praise," and that when she had read the demands of the Church, she returned a conciliatory and temperate answer, but replied that it was impossible

[1] Letter of the Queen of England to Randolph, 10th July 1565. Printed in Keith, p. 296.

for her to renounce the Mass for herself or her household, not being yet persuaded that there was any impiety in it, "but that she would leave the Establishment of religion in the body of the realm to the decision of the three Estates of Parliament." Tytler rightly comments that "a more gentle and reasonable reply to an extravagant demand could hardly have been given."[1]

Moray and Argyll then conceived a plot to abduct Lennox and Darnley, deport them to Berwick, and hand them over to the English Governor, and they obtained Randolph's assurance that the Queen of England would receive them as prisoners.

Mary got a hint of the danger to her affianced husband (as also to herself, for she was to be seized at the same time and carried off to St Andrews), and by her personal courage and rapidity outwitted her rebellious lords and her party passed the place of the intended abduction, a narrow defile near Perth, two hours before the time appointed.

Moray made a last attempt to rouse the populace, but he met with no success,[2] and the Queen, her patience at last exhausted, took strong action, ordered Moray and Argyll to disperse their forces under pain of treason, and summoned all loyal subjects to assemble in arms in Edinburgh to proceed against the rebels.

She also sent a safe conduct, signed by herself and the entire Council, to her brother, and summoned him to attend her in person, limiting his bodyguard to

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 204.

[2] Knox, p. 381, says: "At Edinburgh they could get no support and none, or very few, resorted to them."

eighty horsemen. Moray, however, thought proper to ignore the command, and finding that he had nothing to hope from the empty promises of the English Queen, he retired to Dumfries. His supporters in Edinburgh and in Dumfries were punished severely in a financial sense for their treason; six of the principal merchants in Edinburgh were fined a thousand merks, and were confined within the Castle until the sum was paid, and a like sum was levied upon the known supporters of the rebels in Dumfries.

On 20th July, Darnley was created Duke of Albany, and on the 28th, the Queen issued a proclamation intimating that she had resolved to take him for her husband, and directing that he should henceforth be styled King, and obeyed as such.

On Sunday, 29th July, they "were married in the Chapel of Holyrood-house by Henry Sinclair, Dean of Restalrig and president of the Court of Session."[1]

It is said that Mary wore her mourning dress, and that it was the same garb in which she attended the obsequies in Paris of her late husband, Francis II. After the ceremony Darnley left the Chapel in order that Mary might hear Mass alone, and on returning to her chamber she arrayed herself more fittingly for the ensuing banquet, at which the Earl of Atholl acted as her server, Morton as her carver, and Crawford as her cup-bearer. The King's personal attendants were the Earls of Cassillis, Eglinton, and Glencairn. Mary was radiant in her happiness, and there appeared to be no cloud in her sky save only her estrangement from her brother.

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 145.

The Heraldic Achievements of Mary Queen of Scots and Henry Duke of Albany, Earl of Ross, Lord Darnley, at the Time of their Marriage

From the contemporary record in the "Workman MS." book (*circa* 1565) in H.M. Register House, Lyon Office, Edinburgh
(The subsequent erasure of Darnley's title as "King of Scottis" should be noted)

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The register book of the Church of the Canongate in Edinburgh, under date 29th July 1565, contains the record of the marriage in the following terms :—"Henry, Duk of Albany, Erll of Rois, Marie be the Grace of God Quene, Soverane of this Realme, 1. 2. 3. Married in the Chapell of Halyruid." The entry is recorded under the note "Henry and Marie Kyng and Qwenie of Scotis."[1] The figures of course denote the three publications of the banns of marriage.

The alleged "secret marriage" in the apartment of David Rizzio in Stirling Castle, appears to rest chiefly on a reputed "contemporary record" published by Prince Labanoff,[2] and to be so extremely improbable that it is merely mentioned in passing, but there is no doubt that Rizzio was very active in promoting Mary's marriage to one whom he considered would advance his own interests.

Darnley during the days of his courtship, had however succeeded in exciting the suspicion, dislike, and envy of the entire Court circle. He had not retained a single friend of his own rank and his one intimate associate was David Rizzio, so far as the phrase may be used between two men of such a wide difference in rank. Even to the Italian, to whom he owed so much, and who was the sole individual who openly approved of the marriage, he behaved as an overweening braggart and boaster. The man had not a single redeeming feature amongst men, yet the Queen, in her fond affection, considered him almost perfect. The clouds gathered faster, however, immediately after her hasty marriage.

[1] Strickland's *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., p. 225 note.
[2] *Recueil des Lettres de Marie Stuart.*

The Queen ordered her brother, the Earl of Moray, to be "put to the horn," for he was now in open rebellion against her. He found few to support him and even the Reformers to whom he appealed, refused him any help, and he was obliged to fly to Carlisle; there to throw himself entirely into the arms of his country's hereditary enemies against his own Queen.

His action at this time is such conclusive evidence of his calculated treason, and his relentless determination to discredit the Queen, that it seems incredible in these modern days, when we pride ourselves on our fairness and justice, that men can be found who wilfully blind themselves to facts, and who can still try to fasten the crimes of this arch-traitor upon his victim. In his own days it is perhaps more understandable; he dominated the Lords, the Council, and the Parliament to an extent that seems almost unbelievable, and those whom he did not dominate he overawed. Knox and the Reformers acknowledged him as their own bulwark against Papistry, and the one hope of the Reformed religion. Lethington, Morton, Argyll, and the rest of the statesmen of any prominence, he held in the hollow of his hand. Mary, poor credulous fool, trusted him to such an extent that she had utterly destroyed her chief safeguard against his rapacity, Huntly and the House of Gordon, at his behest, and she now stood, protected only by her regality and the witless boy she had married, practically defenceless against his venom and his guile when he should once more be strong enough to deal with her, and to drag her down.

Every historian,—all her enemies through the centuries, acknowledge her winsomeness, her courage, and her virtue down to the marriage with Darnley at least, and only begin to traduce her after that poor reed had broken in her hand.

For once Moray's schemes had been premature, and his efforts to enlist the aid of Knox and the people, to traffic with England and stir up a formidable rebellion against the Queen because of her faith and her marriage to a man of the same religion, had failed, but it had only failed because the time was not ripe and the people had not yet been sufficiently embittered against the Queen and the Prince, who presented a noble picture to the populace, whatever impression he had already created amongst his Peers.

It was now to be Moray's task so to embitter her subjects against her, to pose as the Saviour of the Reformed religion, and to find material to blast her reputation both as Queen and woman. She herself had provided him with the necessary material in taking David Rizzio as her secretary and Darnley as her husband.

Soon after the marriage the wedded pair opened negotiations with Philip of Spain and the Pope, and the Catholic star once again seemed in the ascendant both in France and England, where the threat of war with Spain was becoming an imminent menace. The gesture of Mary and Darnley towards Philip was quite a natural result of Elizabeth's bitter hostility to the marriage she had herself assisted by the release of Lennox and her collusion with the Queen's rebels.

David Rizzio also, had practically assumed the authority and position of a Secretary of State by

reason of Lethington's temporary eclipse, which was certainly deserved, for he was, at least tainted with suspicion of being a participator in Moray's treason. Rizzio's star, thanks to the unscrupulous folly and insensate jealousy of the young King, was destined to be a meteor of very brief transit.

Moray's defection also had other results. His enmity helped to bring back into favour Lord Gordon, the dispossessed eldest son of the old Earl of Huntly, and the Queen's early suitor. His attainder was now lifted and he was restored to his titles and the residue of his estates. Cruelly as his family had been treated, he was to remain the Queen's constant, steadfast friend throughout his life.

Then came another link in the chain of Mary's fate. The loss or coldness of so many of those she believed her friends, and the estrangement of others by Darnley's miserably foolish behaviour, showed the Queen her utter lack of resolute supporters, and so, less than a month after her ill-starred marriage, she sent an express to France with her command to the one man she held in such strong distaste for his licentiousness, albeit she admired him for his courage and reckless audacity. The Earl of Bothwell was to return to Scotland and re-enter her service! In the nick of time he obeyed her mandate, and, base as he was in other ways, he proved, for a time, her saviour by his resolution and his courage to withstand men even worse than himself, during the dark days that were to follow.

CHAPTER VIII

QUEEN MARY'S "GLORIOUS MAN"

JAMES HEPBURN, EARL OF BOTHWELL, a typical reckless, adventurous Borderer, had already achieved an unenviable and notorious reputation at the time when he came prominently into the Court history of Queen Mary, in the September of 1565. It is desirable briefly to sketch in that reputation, in order that the character of, and the influence wielded by the greatest hero and chiefest villain of the life of Mary Queen of Scots, may be the easier understood.

As a young man in Edinburgh a decade previously, he had been "a power behind the throne" of the Regent, Mary of Guise, during her daughter's wedded life as Queen of France, and there is no question of his loyalty and trustworthiness in any of the adventures—save only in his amours—in which he was then engaged.

He was a fine figure of a man, about thirty years of age, immensely powerful in build, in the pink of condition by his hard manner of life, and although somewhat addicted to excesses of all kinds, and to bouts of hard drinking, nothing seemed to affect his iron constitution.

Decidedly handsome, with a slightly aquiline nose, piercing dark brown eyes and ruddy brown hair

and moustache, he wore a little pointed tuft of beard, almost more in the style of a Napoleonic "imperial," than in the full-bearded fashion of his time, and his cheeks were clean shaven. A florid complexion, loud, laughing voice, and a somewhat swaggering care-free manner, made him frequently hated by the men, and attractive to the women with whom he came into contact.

After the death of the old Earl of Huntly, and the proscription and forfeiture of his heir, George, Lord Gordon, Bothwell sought and obtained the friendship of that young nobleman against the power and influence of the latter's bitterest enemy, the Earl of Moray, and these two representatives of Border and Highland interests, formed a powerful antidote to Moray's influence whenever the latter should wane, and the Queen have need to find other friends. That time was now at hand!

Of Bothwell's wild and reckless love affairs in his youth many tales were now rife—some undoubtedly true and some probably false. In his early manhood he was contracted in marriage to a daughter of the powerful house of Beaton, and a relative of the Archbishop of that name, but he jilted her without reason given, and she married the Laird of Buccleuch instead. He next entered into a bond with England to surrender his Castle of Hermitage in return for a promise of the hand in marriage of the Duchess of Suffolk, an aunt of the English King, Edward VI., and, with Lennox, he had suffered banishment from his native country for treason on that occasion, but with characteristic recklessness, he returned to the

Border when he thought the affair had "blown over," and he was suffered to remain in undisturbed occupation of his stronghold.

He submitted to the English after the battle of Pinkie, but only narrowly escaped execution by them for his participation. Later, as stated, he proved a faithful and powerful supporter of the Regent of Scotland, Mary of Guise. He gathered together a train of adherents as reckless as himself, Ormistounes, Elliots, Hepburns, and other Borderers, who were ready for any wild deed of blood or plunder at his bidding, and when Queen Elizabeth despatched a sum of four thousand pounds for sustenance of the Scottish Reformers against Mary of Guise, Bothwell, although actually at the time in secret negotiations with the Reformers, waylaid their emissary and seized the treasure for his own use. He then threw himself heart and soul into the service of the Queen Regent, against the Protestant Lord James Stuart and the Earl of Arran, and was despatched by her on an embassy to her relatives in France.

On this occasion he was involved in a most disgraceful affair. On his way to France he met a Danish lady of noble birth, Anne Trondison, who fell violently in love with him. In a very short time they were formally betrothed, if not legally married, and he proceeded on his journey with her into Germany, where he basely deserted her and absconded with the whole of her dowry. She is supposed to have died in poverty.

After Mary's return to Scotland, he had been accused by the Earl of Arran of a plot to seize the

Queen's person, assassinate his old enemy and her brother, the Earl of Mar, and usurp the government of the Kingdom. Although Arran was alleged to be deranged at the time, and shortly afterwards was incarcerated as hopelessly insane, his story was accepted, and Bothwell was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle on Moray's advice, whence he soon escaped and fled to England, subsequently crossing to France and entering the King's Guard in Paris.

Such was the man to whom the Queen turned in her extremity, and in the rebellion of her brother Moray, of whom she said to Bothwell that "she saw whereabout he went, and that he would set the crown upon his own head."

So we find the Queen's secret messenger, Hepburn of Riccartoune, riding express, waiting upon my Lord of Bothwell in Paris, and informing him of her sore need; telling him that Moray, with the intriguing advice and assistance of Randolph, the English Ambassador, who undoubtedly had his Queen's commands behind him, had dared to enter the capital city of Edinburgh, and to cry upon the citizens in the name of their religion to drive the Lord Darnley —for so they designated him, refusing him Mary's commanded title of King—from the throne and the country! Moray himself admitted this in a letter to Cecil,[1] in which he says that the Queen was convinced that the rebellion against the government was the result of the English Queen's encouragement, and that she felt assured that Randolph was using

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Earl of Moray to Cecil, 14th October 1565.

every effort to convey his Queen's approval to her rebels.

Riccartoune told Bothwell of her high courage at this insolent treason. Her brother had found that there was a vast difference between "the Earl of Moray, the Queen's trusted counsellor," and the "Bastard of Scotland" in rebellion against her, and even his co-religionists had refused him support and succour in his rebellion, so that he had been compelled to retire to the Border.

Bothwell lost no time in obeying his Sovereign's summons, and we can imagine the reckless, gusty laugh at the plight of her who had so often rated him for his licentiousness, had even imprisoned him on the advice of her brother, and at the turn of Fortune's wheel which now caused her to seek his assistance against his old enemy.

Nicholas Hubert, or "French Paris" as he was to be known in Scotland, was my Lord's chamber-boy, valet, jackal, a panderer to his vices and pleasures, but a lacquey, never a friend and seldom a confidant; a linguist, a dilettante, a philosopher and a rascal no doubt; his one saving grace his blind devotion and loyalty to the greater rascal, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, with whom he now enters Scotland's story.

So for many days we find the precious pair riding post through France, through Germany, and across Denmark, drenched by the rain of the mid-September days, making what haste they could, Bothwell drinking much on occasion, no doubt, to keep off the effects of the continuous wettings of an inconsiderately damp

autumn. Arrived at the coast no vessel could be found to land the travellers at Leith, and besides Bothwell must needs get first to the Border and raise a wild troop "to hunt the mangy fox." So, at long last, a little vessel landed them on the sand-dunes north of Berwick, without great adventure by the way.

Meanwhile Riccartoune, travelling by another route from Dunkerque, was captured by an English vessel sent to try and intercept Bothwell, no doubt at Moray's earnest solicitation, and was taken prisoner to London.

A month previously a messenger of Queen Elizabeth, one of the grooms of her bed-chamber, Silas Tamworth, had been sent to Edinburgh with a secret letter to the Earl of Moray, and an open one to the Queen of Scots. The latter missive was indicted in the expectation that Moray could easily raise the Congregationalists and the whole of the Reforming party against the Queen, and that the latter would now be ready to listen to reason or to threats.

Elizabeth had reckoned without sufficient knowledge of the spirit with which she had to deal, a spirit as fiery and as resolute as her own, and Mary's reply to Tamworth was startling in its clear expression of her rights:[1]

"I am not so lowly born, nor yet have I such small alliances abroad, that if compelled by your mistress, she shall find them of such small account as she believes. The place which I fill in relation to the succession to the Crown of England is no vain or imaginary one," she said, "and by God's grace it

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, the Queen's answer to Tamworth, 12th August 1565.

shall appear to the world that my designs shall prove as substantial as those which, at any time, my neighbours have taken in hand."

She went on to reiterate her demand that Elizabeth should, by Act of the English Parliament, settle the crown upon herself and "King Henry," and upon their issue, and that the Queen of England should lend no countenance or assistance to her rebels.

She dismissed Elizabeth's "Resident," Randolph, for his intrigues with her brother, the Earl of Moray, now outlawed! Randolph refused to accept his dismissal and he so encouraged the fatuous Tamworth that the latter, declining to recognise Darnley's kingly status, refused a safe conduct for his return journey because it was signed "Henry R.," and his refusal led to his own undoing.

Information reached Lord Hume, who promptly waylaid the English emissary on Scottish territory, beat him sorely, appropriated the horses and arms of Tamworth and his party, and imprisoned the whole of them at Hume Castle on the Scottish side of the Border. It has been suggested that Bothwell had a hand in this exploit, but it would seem that it must have occurred just prior to his landing.

From Berwick he appears to have gone direct to Hermitage; two days later arrived at Holyrood-house, and was on his knees before the Queen, kissing her finger-tips, and doubtless professing eternal fidelity, as the dark eyes looked up into the hazel ones with the reckless light in their wild depths.

He found Moray and his friends, Argyll, the Hamiltons, Glencairn and the rest, fled over the

Border, and that for the moment there was tranquillity in Scotland. Bothwell, however, was taking no chances, and he at once summoned to his aid George Gordon, the recently restored son of old Huntly, with a spirit less reckless it is true, but as wild and untameable as his own, who had a bitter account to settle with my Lord of Moray. From the time of Bothwell's return he appears to have been permitted to assume his father's forfeited title and was known as Earl of Huntly.

So strong a spell did the Borderer cast over his friend, that the sentimental Highland spirit at once sought closer ties, and there is no doubt that it was far more Huntly's ardent wooing on Bothwell's behalf, rather than that of Bothwell himself, which persuaded his sister, Jean Gordon, then a girl of nineteen, to listen to his persuasion and to agree to a "handfasting" with Bothwell in the autumn of 1565, although she was supposed to be in love with Ogilvy of Boyne.

It was not long, however, after the return of Bothwell, that further dissensions arose between the Queen and two of the most intimate "friends" who remained with her, Morton the Chancellor, and the King himself. Morton, of course, was always a scheming self-seeker, and a close friend of Moray's. That he would have joined in the latter's rebellion is probable, but for the fact that his position as Chancellor of Scotland made him much more powerful a factor to control affairs in Edinburgh, than by openly joining with the rebels, however powerful, against the Queen.

Nevertheless his position appears to have become untenable, for we find Randolph informing Leicester

on the 8th October[1] that "the Queen's Chancellor has forsaken her and turned over to the Lords' party." Morton, however, did not cease to be Chancellor until 20th March 1565/6, when his complicity in the plot and murder of Rizzio was clearly evident.

Bothwell could do no wrong in the Queen's eyes after his prompt response to her summons, and his strong counsel and rapidity of judgment, must have been a great contrast to Darnley's craven vacillations and fearfulness. She created him Lieutenant-General of the Marches and Admiral of Scotland; when she signed the warrant for his appointment and passed the parchment on to Darnley for his signature, "the King" fumed and refused to sign, on the plea that he had promised the post of Warden of the Marches to his father, the Earl of Lennox. Mary's reply was temperate but firm; Lennox was not, and never could be, *persona grata* with the wild spirits of the Border; Bothwell was one of themselves, and understood their temperament, and therefore Bothwell was to have the post. Darnley grumbled, but at length grudgingly gave way.

And so the first seeds of disagreement and jealousy were sown. We find an early mention of these dissensions in a letter from Randolph to Cecil:[2]

"What jars there are already arisen between her and her husband; she to have her will one way and he another. He to have his father Lieutenant-General and she the Lord Bothwell; she to have this man preferred and he another."

[1] Keith, Appendix 164.

[2] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 15th October 1565.

Now there has never been even a suggestion of the possibility of any intimacy between the Queen and Bothwell at this early date, even by Mary's most bitter detractors, but we see here how the jealousy arose, in which the cruel slanders against her had their origin. The same insensate hate and jealousy that were, almost at the same time, to manifest themselves against a far less powerful object, David Rizzio, and with just as much cause in both cases —none!

The Milanese, Rizzio, was a songster of no mean order, and added to his usefulness as the Queen's French secretary, he more and more beguiled her with his lute and voice, as Darnley more and more absented himself from her side, and sought that of his boon companions in the hunting field and at the wine cup. Mary could not or would not see the writing on the wall. Already the Lords were complaining of "this upstart Davy," and he was alleged to have persuaded the Queen to pardon the Hamiltons, which she had recently done. Darnley and Lennox were furious at the Queen's leniency, for the Hamiltons were the sole disputants of their claim to heirship of the Crowns of England and Scotland. So in retaliation, her husband pressed the Queen to extend her forgiveness to Moray and Ruthven also, and we find the first insidious suggestion from the Earl of Lennox that the Queen "was using David (Rizzio) more like a lover than her husband, forsaking her husband's bed and board very often." A more iniquitous lie was never formulated! Tytler[1] is more than justified in saying

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 215.

that he "had the folly to become the dupe of this absurd delusion." Darnley was a sensuous, drunken sot, and the Queen had begun to realise the fact, and to avoid him and his habits in consequence, but to attribute her resulting dislike of him to any intimacy with Rizzio is a shameful libel.

In November, four months after her marriage, she found it necessary to exclude Darnley from the Council, and all knowledge of the Council's affairs. The reason was obvious; he was neither fitted nor anxious for participation in them.

But like a foul breath from a miasma-haunted swamp, Moray saw to it that secret whisperings were continually poured into Darnley's ears, to the effect that David Rizzio was the lover of his wife! Moray had himself stated to Randolph, who passed the calumny on to his master Cecil, that he was in possession of a secret "not to be named for reverence sake,"[1] and "like a worm i' the bud" the suggestion rankled in the fetid mind of Henry Darnley and burned like white-hot iron!

Moray was now at Newcastle with his fellow-rebels, "looking through his fingers" at events, and awaiting his opportunity. Elizabeth failing with her promised help, other than a miserable one thousand pounds she had sent him by Bedford, he went to London to try personal persuasion; but in the meantime the Kings of France and Spain had espoused the cause of the Queen of Scots, and they denounced Elizabeth to her face, through their respective Ambassadors, of being a party to Moray's rebellion and of a considered policy

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Randolph to Cecil, 18th October 1565.

to stir up strife in other countries in order to avoid peril in her own.

Hence, when Moray at length arrived at the English Court with the Abbot of Kilwinning, he found a reception at his first audience which was anything but cordial, and in answer to questions he replied, not unnaturally, that he knew "assuredly that we had lately faithful promises of aid and support from your Ambassador and familiar servants in your name; and further we have your own handwriting confirming such promises."[1]

Elizabeth repudiated her own action and insisted that Moray and Kilwinning on their knees should confess her entire ignorance of their treason. He was perforce obliged to agree, and at a second audience officially given him by the Queen he implored her on his knees, in the presence of the two foreign Ambassadors, to intercede on his behalf with Mary, in order to save him from wreck of his honour, conscience, and estate. Elizabeth turned the full fury of her simulated anger and contempt upon him, instead of giving him the help he sought. A copy of her speech is preserved:[2]

"I am astonished," she said, "that you have dared without warning to come before me. Are you not branded as rebels to your Sovereign? Have you not spurned her summons and taken arms against her authority? I command you on the faith of a gentleman to declare the truth!"

[1] Strickland's *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., p. 248, and *Melvil's Memoirs*.

[2] State Paper Office, Speech of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Moray in the presence of the French Ambassador, 23rd October 1565.

Moray appeared astounded at his reception; the spirit of the man was humiliated to the dust, but he realised his danger, and his crafty brain saw that he must humble himself still further. He denied his treason, voiced the fear that the many enemies by whom he was surrounded would encompass his destruction, swore that any suggestion that the Queen of England had encouraged him to rebel against his own Queen was ridiculous, and threw himself on her mercy.

Elizabeth had achieved her object, and after calling the attention of the foreign Ambassadors to his false protestations, proceeded to stultify her own honour in her turn:[1]

"It is well," she said, "that you have told the truth, for neither I nor anyone else in my name, did encourage you in your unnatural rebellion against your Sovereign, nor to be mistress of a world could I maintain any subject to be disobedient to his Prince. It might move God to punish me by similar trouble in my own realm! As for you two, ye are unworthy traitors and I command you instantly to leave my presence."

If it were not so nauseating an example of the utterly unscrupulous treachery of Elizabeth to Mary of Scotland, such a comedy would be intensely amusing, for every soul present was aware of the facts. Sir Robert Melvil, brother of Sir James, who was present, tells us[2] the whole thing was arranged to satisfy officially the Ambassadors of France and Spain,

[1] State Paper Office, Speech of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Moray in the presence of the French Ambassador, 23rd October 1565.

[2] *Melvil's Memoirs*, p. 57.

and there is little doubt that this was the sole object of the farce, but great care was taken to give the widest publicity to the Queen's "just censure" of Moray and his fellow-rebels, and the news is said to have caused great triumph in the party of Mary and the King in Scotland, to whom Elizabeth sent a full account.

Elizabeth having failed him, Moray exerted himself to the utmost to avoid the forfeiture, which he so richly deserved, of his estates and titles, and he even condescended to ask David Rizzio, whom he had maligned, to intercede for him. Lethington at this time was more than suspect of being in league with Moray, and was out of favour, so that Mary had come to rely more and more upon the Italian for advice; Moray actually sent him a diamond-ring as a bribe, and Sir Robert Melvil was persuaded to approach Queen Mary to solicit her pardon.[1] Both efforts failed, and to this failure may be attributed Moray's share in the plot to murder Rizzio.

Moray next sought the help of the remaining Lords of the Queen's Council to secure pardon for himself, Argyll, and Glencairn, and it appears probable that they would have succeeded, backed as they were by the advice of Lethington, Melvil, and Throckmorton, when in an evil hour Mary was induced to join the Catholic league for restoration throughout Europe of the Catholic faith. There is evidence that Morton, the discredited Chancellor, Lindsay, and Ruthven, the fanatic Reformers, learned of this intention, which would almost certainly imply the submersion of the Reforming party; and they at once conspired to

[1] *Melvil's Memoirs*, p. 63.

remove the Queen's principal Catholic adviser, Rizzio, and so entangle Darnley in their plot that he could take no action against them. Lethington was certainly a party to this plot, and Chalmers[1] charges him with full complicity, and says that it was designed "by the artifice peculiar to Maitland to make Darnley the patron of the plot," but there does not seem sufficient evidence of this, or that he was more than a passive supporter of the crime.

It was easy enough to arouse the King's jealous nature, and the hint which was constantly whispered in his ears, that Rizzio was probably the father of Mary's unborn child, incredible as it was, was enough to seal the doom of the unfortunate Italian.

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 162.

CHAPTER IX

MURDER MOST FOUL

THERE was a period of insidious quiet in Court circles after Bothwell's recall from France, and his creation as Warden of the Marches—the calm before the storm!

He returned to Hermitage and set about establishing a chain of defensive posts along the Border, against any steps which might be taken by the English and the traitorous Earl of Moray.

Darnley was fretting at his exclusion from the Council and the refusal of the "Crown matrimonial which she had promised him in the early ardour of her affection."[1] This gift would have made him co-equal with the Queen in all affairs of State, although he was unwilling to undertake any of the onerous tasks of the kingly office. With the poisonous hints previously referred to, poured into his ready ears by the conspirators, he was now watching, green-eyed, for intimacies between the Queen and her obese songster, David Rizzio; but finding none of a guilty nature, he believed those little confidences which he did see to be the more intimate, because of the nods and winks and whispers between Moray's creatures, Ruthven, Lindsay and the others, who, pardoned and

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 215.

about the Court on Darnley's petition, saw that he noticed frequently enough.

The Earls of Atholl and Huntly, the latter restored to his titles and estates, were continually in attendance on the Queen; both were Bothwell's intimate friends and kept him fully advised of the course of events, and Darnley was almost as jealous of them, and hated them almost as much as he did Rizzio.

Mary the Queen, and the pawn in all this intrigue, was, about Christmas, known to be in a delicate state of health, and might be expected before midsummer to become the mother of the long-prayed-for heir to the two kingdoms. Yet this fact, which should have been likely to unite many of the opposing factions, or at least to evoke feelings of compassion and tenderness even in her besotted husband, brought her no relief, no mercy, in the inevitable dictates of her fate.

She had her Maries about her once again; her brief dream of love and happiness with Darnley was over, and she naturally turned again to the friends and companions of her girlhood. Mary Sempill, herself recently a mother, was quite restored to her old position of chief intimate and friend; she watched the conduct of the King and his petulant outbursts of temper and insobriety with feelings of contempt and disgust. Mary Fleming's love affair with Lethington was drawing on to fruition and now appeared likely to culminate in matrimony. Lethington was partly restored to his old position as secretary, but many of his original privileges and offices had been usurped by the Italian, Rizzio, towards whom he nourished a vengeful jealousy in consequence.

The Queen's love of romance and matchmaking rejoiced in Lethington's love affair, and busied her in another which was very largely brought about by her own contriving.

The declared treason of her brother, Moray, had caused her to think with some remorse of the severity towards the Gordons, to which she had been a party at his instigation, and she doubted whether the punishment meted out to that unhappy family had not been unduly severe; hence the restoration of his titles to Lord Gordon. She summoned old Lady Huntly and her daughter, Jean Gordon, to Court, and soon set about endeavouring to arrange a marriage between the latter and her "strong arm" in the South, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell. As we have already seen she was backed in her efforts by the Earl of Huntly himself.

Jean Gordon assented readily enough to the expressed wishes of her brother and the Queen for her to marry Bothwell, and the ceremony took place early in February by the Protestant rite, albeit the bride was a Roman Catholic, at the church in the Canongate. The Queen presented her with her wedding dress and signed the contract. Doubtless policy played a large hand in Mary's furtherance of this marriage, for it united the most powerful noble in the south with the strongest Chief in the Highlands, and provided her—as she thought—with a sure buckler in the north as well as on the south of her Kingdom.

The Queen's sole recreations were now the pleasant diversions of playing-cards, singing and music. After supper, with one or other of her ladies or friends at

Court, the tender sentimental singing of Rizzio to his lute, or the more robust melodies of Mary Sempill to her harp, filled the long hours of the winter evenings.

Darnley complained that she and the "black traitor Davy," as he now termed him, sat up too late at nights, but always she had either Lady Argyll, Lady Huntly, or one of her Maries with her. That Rizzio took full advantage of his influence, and presumed upon her tolerant friendliness with him, is not to be denied, and he was both hated and feared by the Protestant faction as a malevolent enemy to the Reformed religion, doubtless with equal justice. Darnley's suspicions and jealousies of him reached their zenith about the time of the Bothwell marriage, and by mid-February the King had become the chief instrument, and was made to appear the instigator of two infamous plots. The first arose from the refusal of his "Crown matrimonial," and Ruthven's insidious suggestions led the besotted coward to conspire with a notorious assassin, George Douglas a natural son of the Earl of Arran, to murder Rizzio, as the first step towards his own advancement to regal power.

Ruthven was at that time confined to his bed of a sickness which appeared likely to be mortal, and was, in fact, to end fatally in a short time. Douglas, however, sought him out at Darnley's suggestion, and conveyed to him the latter's request that Ruthven would assist him to remove "that villain Davy." Ruthven describes himself[1] as "scarce able

[1] Ruthven's narrative, Keith, vol. iii., p. 260, and in the Lennox MSS.

to walk twice the length of his chamber" at that time, but he conveyed the intention to Randolph, the English Ambassador, now banished over the Border and at Berwick, and the latter in turn passed it on to the Earl of Leicester in a remarkable letter.[1] He told Elizabeth's favourite that the King and his father, the Earl of Lennox, were determined to murder Rizzio, and "as to the Queen, the Crown would be torn from her whose dishonour was discovered," and went on to say:

"I know now for certain that this Queen repenteth her marriage, that she hateth him (the King) and all his kin. I know that there are practices in hand, contrived by the father and son, to come by the Crown against her will. I know that if that take effect which is intended, David, with the consent of the King, shall have his throat cut within these ten days."

Ruthven enlisted in the dastardly plot no less a person than the Chancellor of the Kingdom, the Earl of Morton, who had a grudge of his own against Rizzio, in the expectation that the Seals of his Office would be taken from him and given to the Italian.

Meetings were held in Ruthven's sick-chamber and messages were sent to Moray, in readiness at Newcastle for any event, and ever "looking through his fingers" waiting for the first chance to avert the ruin that threatened him. No less a person than the Earl of Lennox bore the message asking him for his countenance and help, and for him to return to

[1] Letter from Randolph to the Earl of Leicester, 13th February 1565/6, Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 215.

Edinburgh and take charge of the affairs of State under the King, so soon as the murder was committed. All the men involved owed their positions to the Queen, yet not one of them had the least compassion for his benefactress, or for her unborn child.

It was not, therefore, to be expected that any one of them would trust his fellow, and consequently a covenant or "band" had to be drawn up and signed by all the conspirators, which would make them equally responsible and give the proceedings some semblance of legality. It was drawn in the King's name,[1] and stated that "the Queen's gentle and good nature was abused by wicked and ungodly persons, especially by an Italian stranger named David," and it declared the King's intention with the assistance of certain of the nobility, to seize her enemies, and if any difficulty or resistance took place "to cut them off immediately and slay them wherever it happened." It went on to promise solemnly on the King's word "to maintain and defend his assistants and associates in this enterprise, even though carried into execution in the presence of the Queen's Majesty or within her Palace of Holyrood-house." This precious deed was signed by the King, Morton, and Ruthven, and it is now certain that its contents were known also to Moray, Argyll, Lethington, and Lindsay.

The second plot also was supported by a covenant or "band" and was an enlargement of the first. It promised assistance to the King in all his just quarrels "to be friends to his friends and enemies to his enemies, to give him the Crown matrimonial, to maintain the

[1] Copy of the "Band" in the British Museum, endorsed by Randolph.

Protestant religion and uphold every reform founded on the Word of God." The King pledged himself to pardon and restore the Earl of Moray and all other banished Lords, to stay the proceedings for their forfeiture, and to restore them to their lands and dignities. This deed bore the same signatures, with that of the Earl of Moray in addition.[1]

There is no doubt whatever that the whole plot was known to Randolph, to the Earl of Leicester, to the English Secretary of State, Cecil, and to Queen Elizabeth herself, for a letter dated 6th March 1665 (old style), and signed at Berwick by the Earl of Bedford and Thomas Randolph, is also still in existence in the State Paper Office, and is endorsed by the clerk to Mr Secretary Cecil as from "the Earl of Bedford and Mr Randolph to my Master."

So here we have the stage set for perhaps the greatest personal tragedy of Queen Mary's life in Scotland; greater in its effects, though lesser in the victim of it, than the other tragedies which it led up to, or even than the cruel fate which was to dog the Quee 's footsteps down to the last great tragedy of all. This letter definitely states that Moray is "privy" to the plot, which was intended to put an end to his banishment, and replace him in the power which he had lost.[2]

Mary Sempill felt some curious foreboding that a deep-laid scheme was imminent, and sent word to Bothwell—on his honeymoon at Hermitage with his new wife, Jean—to Huntly and to Atholl, that the

[1] State Paper Office. Copy of the Band by Randolph, endorsed by Cecil.
[2] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 219.

Queen might have need of them; and so on the 7th of March these nobles, with French Paris in attendance on Bothwell, were lodged in the Palace. That day the Queen opened Parliament in person, the King petulantly refusing to accompany her, and disporting himself on the sands at Leith.

Two nights later she dined quietly in her little closet adjoining her bed-chamber; the latter communicated by a privy stairway, which had been constructed at the time of her marriage, with Darnley's bed-chamber on the floor below. The little stairway had merely a rope for a handrail, and was accessible from the Queen's bed-chamber by a door behind the arras. The dining closet was scarcely big enough to contain its central table, six chairs and a small settle or couch, and was lit by only a few candles.

It was a wild night of wind, flurries of snow and sleet, and the courtyard had an inch or two of snow covering its rough stone paving; a suitable night for dark deeds.

The Queen was attended in her cabinet by Lord Robert Stuart her half-brother, Arthur E kine the Captain of the Guard, David Rizzio her secretary, the Countess of Argyll her half-sister, and Beaton of Creach an equerry. Her Maries awaited her in her bed-chamber adjoining.

At seven o'clock, when it was quite dark, a sudden flare of torches shone on the wall from the court-yard and caused a moment's alarm. A glance through the window showed the court-yard filled with a rabble of armed men, and that the gates were being closed. Lord Robert Stuart rose and left the room by the

winding stair from the Queen's bedroom, and did not again appear on the scene. Arthur Erskine rose to his feet and was about to follow him, when the tall form of the King filled the opening through which Lord Robert had just passed, and Erskine perforce had to stand back. The others present also rose, except the Queen, who, for a moment, took no notice. Loud voices were now heard from Darnley's apartment below.

The King was obviously perturbed, but he advanced to the settle with a murmured remark about its being very late, and placed an arm around his wife as he seated himself beside her on the settle. This action caused Mary to look up, and then to rise hastily to her feet, the King still holding her, at the unexpected sight of Ruthven's white and cadaverous face in the doorway. He was clad in complete armour, steel cap on his head and a drawn dagger in his hand. Behind him crowded other figures almost as sinister, George Douglas, Kerr of Fawdonsyde and Lindsay, all armed; they advanced and filled the little room to overcrowding.

The Queen, looking pitiful in the dim candle-light, and her face tense with terror, turned to her husband, who still kept his arm close around her.

"What means this intrusion? Is this your work, my Lord?" She had grasped the meaning of the armed visitors only too well.

He answered stuttering, "They are my friends. They will do you no harm, but they will rid me of this cuckolder, Davy. He hath been about you too long. I'll not endure it."

The Queen's Supper-closet at Holyrood-house

(where Rizzio received the first dagger-thrust)

[*Face p.* 120

She ignored him and turned to Ruthven, haggard and grim in the background; for he had just risen from his sick-bed.

"Ruthven I command you! Get you gone!"

"Our business is with this dog, Madam, not with you! Look to your wife, sir, we will do what must be done," and he advanced on Rizzio. Someone stumbled over the table and the lights went out—all save one, held by Lady Argyll.

Rizzio, his little eyes narrow with terror, and his face the colour of chalk, darted behind the Queen, who spread out protecting arms. "Giustizia! sauve ma vie! Madame, sauve ma vie!" he panted as he flung himself on his knees behind her and seized her gown.

Fawdonsyde held a cocked pistol to the Queen's breast, but was dragged aside by Arthur Erskine. Ruthven and Darnley held her fast, in spite of her struggles and cries to them to spare their victim, but George Douglas reached forward over her shoulder, and struck with his long poniard. The blade sunk to the hilt between the Italian's shoulder blades, and the blood spurted over her gown. All was tumult and confusion.

Someone beat at the Italian's hands until he loosed his hold, and he was dragged from the closet into the adjoining room and thence into the presence chamber.

There Morton, Ruthven, Douglas, Fawdonside and Lindsay—and some say Darnley himself—struck and struck again, growling, snarling and cursing over the now mangled body, like a pack of hounds breaking up a fox. Darnley had flung his wife into the hands of her maids. The door of the presence chamber was

shut, and she mercifully could not see what was being done to her poor singer, when his bleeding body had been dragged away from her skirts after the first fierce dagger thrust—but now it lay stark with fifty-six wounds to tell of the ferocity with which he had been slain, and with the King's own dagger still sticking in his body; eloquent of his part in the foul deed.

At last one spoke; it was Lindsay: "He's done now! Let be," he cried loudly. The door opened. Ruthven, faint with the sickness still upon him, and reeking with the foul scene in which he had participated, staggered back into the cabinet, where the Queen had collapsed in awful terror on the settle.

"Wine, wine," he demanded hoarsely, and searched vainly for an unbroken flagon. Mary Sempill turned on him like a fury, and rated him soundly with her tongue, until he cursed her into silence. Nevertheless he asked no more, but after attempting to excuse the deed, and voicing some complaints against Rizzio, shortly staggered out the way he had come.

Mary, distraught with her terror and the misery of her loss, now rose, and in a hard, dead voice spoke for the only time since her scream at the first dagger thrust.

"Is it so?" she asked tonelessly, for she was not, until that moment, aware that the dark deed had been so complete. "Then I weep no more. Farewell tears, we will now think only of how to be avenged!"

The Queen's own story of the murder, as given by Keith,[1] is so interesting an account, that I cannot refrain from giving it in her own language:

[1] Letter of Queen Mary to the Archbishop of Glasgow (then in Paris), Keith, pp. 330-334.

"Upon the 9th day of March, we being at even about seven hours, in our own cabinet at our supper, sociated with our sister the Countess of Argyle, our brother the commendator of Holyrood-house, the laird of Creich, Arthur Erskine and certain others our domestick servitors, in quiet manner, especially by reason of our evil disposition (condition) being counselled to sustain ourself with flesh, having then passed almost to the end of seven months in our birth, the King our husband come to us in our cabinet, and placed himself beside us, at our supper. The Earl of Morton and Lord Lindsay, with their assisters, boden in warlike manner, to the number of eighteen persons, occupied the whole entry of our Palace of Holyrood-house, so that they believed, it was not passable for any person, to escape forth from the same. In the meantime the Lord Ruthven, boden in like manner, with his complices, took entry perforce, in our cabinet; and there seeing our Secretary David Riccio[1] among our other servants, declared he had to speak with him. In that instant we required the King, our husband, if he knew anything of that enterprise, who denied the same; Also we commanded the Lord Ruthven, under the pain of treason, to avoid him forth of our presence, Riccio then, for refuge took safeguard, having retired him behind our back, but Ruthven, with his complices cast down our table upon ourself, put violent hands on him, struck him over our shoulder with whinyards, one part of them standing before our face with bended dags, most cruelly took him out of our cabinet, and at the entry of our chamber gave him fifty-six strokes with whinyards and swords. In doing whereof we were not only struck with great dread, but also by sundrie considerations, was most justly induced to take extreme fear of our life. After this deed, immediately, the said Lord Ruthven, coming

[1] Chalmers says "this is the proper spelling," *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 164.

again into our presence, declared how they and their complices were highly offended with our proceedings and tyrrany, which was not to them tolerable; how we were abused by the said David whom they had actually put to death, namely in taking his counsel for maintenance of the ancient religion; debarring of the lords who were fugitives, and entertaining of amity with foreign Princes and nations with whom we were confederate; putting also upon the Council the Lords Bothwell and Huntly who were traitors, and with whom Riccio associated himself."

The bitter cold night dragged out its weary length. A night of horror and of tumult, of wild storm and heavy snow-wreaths; finally, towards morning, of black frost and stillness within the Palace, as without, a stillness which could almost be felt.

Within the Palace, immediately the tumult began, Huntly, Bothwell and the Master of Sempill, who had been supping together attended by French Paris, had started to their feet with the intention of making their way to the Royal apartments, but at the door of their room they found the entry crowded with armed men, who were not of the Queen's Guard, and their way was barred.

Bothwell, never at a loss for boldness, ordered them to "stand aside" in peremptory tones, but it was of no avail. He was refused, and they perforce had to yield to superior numbers and remain prisoners in their supper-room until morning, unless they could win their way out by stratagem. Towards morning they succeeded in passing one by one through a back window, on to the roof of an adjoining outhouse, whence the rest was easy.

There seemed no prospect of obtaining succours for the Queen in Edinburgh. Everywhere they found men in the liveries of one or other of the Reforming Lords, and after a hurried consultation they separated, Bothwell and French Paris to the Border to collect the moss-troopers in strength, Huntly to the north to bring down a Highland force to the Queen's assistance, Sempill remaining in Edinburgh to watch for an opportunity to serve his Queen and rejoin his wife in the Palace, as he was in no danger from her enemies, and they would certainly ignore him.

But it was, for Henry Darnley, Duke of Albany and King-Consort of Scotland, a tragic error in his calculations, to let the Earl of Bothwell go free!

Meanwhile the Queen had slept fretfully and uneasily; fits of shuddering and sobbing alternating with little moans and sighs which broke from her in her sleep, alarmed her ladies with the fear that the horrible events of the night would have a serious effect, and would bring her hour of travail upon her before her time.

In the early morning she dressed hurriedly, and feverishly paced her chamber. Twice she essayed to leave it by the privy stair to Darnley's apartments—avoiding the main exit through the presence chamber with the still uncleansed evidence of the night's dreadful work—but she found the doors guarded by strange sentries who were deaf to agonised entreaty and Royal orders alike.

Early in the morning, a Sunday, through her casement window she noticed Sir James Melvil on his way to Church, and earnestly begged him to summon

the Provost of Edinburgh to her assistance. Melvil obeyed her on the instant, and in a brief time the common bell of the Tolbooth was heard ringing its alarm. This brought Darnley (who had been busy writing letters dissolving Parliament, and commanding the Estates to leave the City forthwith), with Ruthven and Lindsay, hurrying to her chamber. The King was in a pitiable state of remorse and obvious fear. He stammered an inquiry as to her health, and asked the meaning of the bell.

She answered him that she had commanded the Chief Magistrate of the City to come to her assistance, and as she spoke there was a murmur of many voices and the trampling of many feet in the courtyard below her windows. She would have moved forward, but Lindsay was before her, and placed himself in her path.

The Provost of Edinburgh announced his office in magisterially pompous tones in which the graver note of anxiety could, however, be detected.

Darnley moved to the window, Ruthven had the Queen by the arm at the other side of the room, and Lindsay, his dagger naked in his hand, hissed a coarse threat that if she spoke a word to betray them he would throw her from the window, "a dead Queen." Poor Queen! Poor girl! She had no choice, and she remained silent.

Darnley leaned over from the casement, the Provost uncovered, and the City Guard saluted the King.

"What would you, Mr Provost? At this early hour of the Sabbath, why are we disturbed?"

"Majesty," answered the chief citizen, "there have been wild rumours and many strange men in the City. One came who said that the Queen's Grace was held a prisoner. I pray your Lordship pardon our intrusion, but we would know——"

"Know then," interrupted the King, "that all is well with the Queen and with me. Her Grace is still sleeping; she is, as is well known, in delicate health; she hath had some poor rest of late and must not be disturbed. Get you all about your affairs assured of our perfect safety and comfort."

Oh, perjured fool and proven coward!

So ended Mary's first hope of rescue, and she spent the day with her ladies. The old Countess of Huntly brought her a message from her son, the Earl, and another from Bothwell was conveyed to her, telling her to hope for speedy relief, the former bringing a stout rope by which she might lower herself from a window in the night!—The Queen of Scots! nearly seven months in her pregnancy! A pitiable expedient to offer!

The same evening the Earl of Moray, with Ochiltree, Rothes and the other proscribed Lords, arrived from Newcastle in accordance with the pre-arranged plot. They were received in private by Darnley and Ruthven, and informed of the success of the conspiracy.

Mary, of course, had no idea that her brother was in any way implicated; his treason was entirely forgotten in the greater villainy of her husband, and indeed she thought he had come to sue for her pardon. On his arrival she sent him word that she desired him to come to her immediately. He came, and she received him as of old, as if he had never angered her and all the intervening months had been a dream.

"Looking through his fingers" at her, as she advanced with outstretched hands and a tender cry of welcome, Moray bowed and would have kissed her hand, but with a bitter cry of "Oh, my brother, had you been here, you would never have let them handle me so," she rested her head on his breast and broke into bitter sobbing.

He kissed her—a Judas kiss. He is said to have wept with her—traitor's tears, for he was "ever looking to the right," and the regal power must have seemed very near to him then.

And then he went out of her presence direct to that of Morton, and to a meeting of the whole of the conspirators — save Darnley who was not consulted. It was decided to imprison the Queen in Stirling Castle until she abdicated and surrendered the whole government of the Kingdom to her husband, the King, under the advice of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal! The penalty of refusal was to be perpetual imprisonment or death!

Strickland says:[1]

"Moray coolly pronounced his veto (*sic* ? vote) for her death by declaring his opinion to Morton and the actual assassins of Riccio, 'that they had gone too far to recede with safety, for they could expect no grace from the Queen, therefore it behoved them to take such measures as the laws of self-preservation required.'"

[1] *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., p. 291.

CHAPTER X

BIRTH OF A PRINCE OF SCOTLAND

MARY soon saw that she had little consideration to expect from the arch-traitor Moray, though she still thought him innocent of any part in the conspiracy. Her first necessity was freedom from her imprisonment, and it was obvious that no petition or threat would procure that for her. If, however, her prayers or her tears were of no avail she had yet two weapons to use—her woman's guile, and a coward's craven fear—and she had a ready subject to use them upon in Henry Darnley.

She sent for him for a Privy Conference, began by upbraiding him for his cruel restraint of her during the scene in her dining-closet, heard his lamentations that he was "so young," and his protestations that he "did but protect her from the bloodthirsty villains who were determined to dispatch Rizzio"; pretended her belief, and perhaps did think she believed, in his own protest that "they went too far," and that he had no hand in the murder. It must be remembered that Darnley remained with her for a space after Rizzio was dragged out of the room, and she had no knowledge of the King's own dagger being found in the body, so finally she really did believe what she wished that his grievous fault arose from a jealous love of his

wife, rather than any doubt of her. Still, even so believing, she could leave no stone unturned in her dire need, and she played upon his fears.

She warned him that he was merely a tool in the hands of reckless, bloodthirsty, and ambitious traitors who, if they dared accuse her to him, the father of her child; if they would put her life and her child's life in peril by such shameful conduct as had been enacted before her but two days by-past, did he imagine that if he stood alone without her authority to protect him, they would hesitate a single moment to destroy him when he stood between them and their ambition?

The wicked falsehood, she continued, that he had been party to Rizzio's bloody end, was intended to be used against him when occasion arose, and to cover him with infamy before the eyes of the whole world!

Hence their only safety lay in escape, and in escape together. "If," she went on, "you wish me to forgive these bloody-minded men, go you and tell them so now, and I will sign their written remission for them, but they shall treat me as their Queen, remove their guards and keep away from my Palace, which they have polluted by blood."

By this time Darnley was in a very panic of terror and remorse; he swore that he had no hand in the assassination either in intent or in the deed itself, and that he would henceforth obey her in all things. He sought out his brother conspirators hoping, poor "perjured fool," that they would not discover his betrayal of them, and would accept the offered pardons. Morton and Ruthven were far too astute to trust their

lives to Darnley's sole protestations, however, and refused to believe in the Queen's promises until they heard them from her own lips.

Darnley—we have Ruthven's own statement for it—replied that he would stake his life upon her faith and honour as a true princess, and so gave the lie to his previous pretence of her guilty intimacy with Rizzio. He led them into her presence in the throne room, where she was seated under the gilded canopy, with Moray standing on the left of the throne in his robes of state; she reassured them of her willingness to pardon their atrocious deed, and the remissions being duly prepared by Lethington and signed, they removed their men, permitted Erskine, now better of his slight hurts, to replace the Royal Guard, and left the Palace.

Mary has been severely criticised for her action in signing these pardons, but a contemporary authority[1] clearly shows that they were merely of a temporary nature for ten days, and it must also be remembered that any such act of the Queen, obtained as this was under fear and duress, would be legally of no effect. That this is quite certain the account alluded to proves:

"It was convened between our Sovereign Lady and all the Lords, committers of the slaughter, except my Lord Ruthven—whom she would not allow to come into her presence, because he was the principal man that came into her cabinet to commit the said slaughter—and with all the remaining Lords banished before, as said is, that her Majesty would give them remission for all crimes bygone unto the eleventh day; and albeit she would subscribe their remissions instantly she said because she was holden in captivity it would do them

[1] *Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland*, 11th March 1565/6, p. 92.

no good, and to satisfy them more pleasantly, she said, she would pass the morn, God willing, to the Tolbooth and there by consent of Parliament, make an act of remission to them for the crimes above written."

Mary, however, knew the slender thread by which her safety, her very life, hung, and moreover her soaring spirit had determined to assert itself and resume the government forthwith. There is no evidence that she had any knowledge of her brother's treachery, but it is probable that she doubted him, so she easily persuaded Darnley to join her, instanter, on a flight to Dunbar, there to meet the levies which she had been advised that Bothwell would bring to her assistance.

The Queen went to her bed with Mary Sempill, and slept peacefully for the first time since the murder. She was aroused at midnight by a scratch on her chamber door. It was her page, who also aroused Mistress Sempill, and in a few moments they were groping their way down the little winding stair to Darnley's apartments. Mary found him armed cap-à-pie and cloaked, fuming in fear at the slight delay and weary with a long and restless vigil, for he had not slept.

Mary Sempill and another of her maids attended her; Sempill led the way with a torch down the private stair, on into the freezing air of the courtyard, through a gap in the wall and into the Chapel Royal. She is said to have asked to see where David Rizzio lay, and to have sworn by the new grave that "a fatter than Rizzio should lie as low before the year is out"! It is a lie, and like most of the lies

told of her throughout the centuries, it bears falsehood on the face of it! She spoke no word, but just looked, as she passed, for she had no time to waste on such sentiment as has been alleged (who would repeat her words if she had?), and if she took a silent farewell of a faithful friend and servant—for whatever his faults he was that—who shall blame her?

Darnley, in a very sweat of fear, whispered to her to hasten; he had seen the look in Ruthven's eyes as he stood in the throne room, and, beneath his steel shirt, his skin crept in terror.

Arthur Erskine mounted, the King was already in the saddle, her ladies kissed her hands, Sempill stood back, his hand to the salute. Erskine, with his feet in the stirrups, spoke but two words: "Now, madam!" assisted her to the pillion behind him, and they were away, walking their horses until clear of the town, to avoid further imperilling the unborn child.

Two servants, a man and a woman, and the Laird of Traquair made up the company. "Were they pursued? Was that a hoof-beat behind?" Darnley asked himself fearfully, continuously looking backwards in his terror. The slow pace set by Erskine preyed upon his nerves and he cried out petulantly:

"Come on, in God's name come on! If this baby dies we can have others"—the proven coward!

She gave him one look of bitter scorn: "Push on and take care of yourself, my Lord, Mr Erskine will take care of me." He needed no second bidding, and with his servant Antony Standen, behind him, put spurs to his horse and disappeared into the gloom.

An eastern "haar" was in the air, and a chill fog drifting over the marshes when they neared Dunbar and were challenged by a small party of mounted men sheltering under the lee of a high castle wall. Traquair, in advance, satisfied them of the identity of the party, of whose advent the hasting King had already advised them.

Out of the misty gloom came Bothwell's lusty voice as Erskine's slower horse reached them: "God save the Queen of Scots," was all he said, but Mary felt the "strong arm" in the tones, and reinvigorated by the thought, made light of the rest of the journey. Dunbar was reached at nine o'clock and received the Queen within its grim walls, the grey tide breaking at the foot of the castle rock.

Safe in the stronghold of Dunbar, Mary slept the sleep of exhaustion, whilst her few powerful friends, Huntly, Atholl and Bothwell, were straining every nerve and muscle in her behalf.

Darnley, quite incapable of serving anyone but himself, was busy with his own affairs, considering how he might succeed in keeping from the Queen the fact that he had anything more than a passive part in the late murderous plot. Eventually he decided that his only chance lay in a betrayal of his own friends!

Late in the day Mary awoke, and immediately ordered a Council to take measures for the restoration of order in the Kingdom, and the punishment of the participators in the recent crime. There were present at the Council, Bothwell, Huntly, and Lord Seton—the King was not present nor summoned by the Queen; recent events had naturally turned her growing

indifference and disgust into something almost like hatred, and his poltroon conduct on the ride to Dunbar made her reluctant to see or have speech with him.

Mary, large-hearted and loving as ever, and ignorant that her brother had any part or lot in the recent murder—for it will be remembered that he was in England at the time, and only appeared on the scene after the event and in the nick of time to condole and even to weep with her in her misery—insisted on a full pardon for the Earls of Moray and Argyll. Bothwell and Huntly, Moray's bitter enemies, opposed this, but the Queen was supported by Seton, and they found it impossible to carry their point.

Writs of treason were issued against the actual slaughterers of Rizzio, so far as Mary was aware of them. Morton, Ruthven, Lindsay, Kerr of Fawdonsyde, George Douglas, and Lethington, were adjudged guilty participators, and Arthur Erskine was dispatched, with copies of the writs, to the Provost of Edinburgh, and bidden to have them affixed to the Mercat Cross.

But the conspirators, and the greater part of their followers, had realised their danger, and had already fled over the Border into England; Lethington alone, rightly trusting to the clemency of the Queen he had hitherto served so well, and the fact that he was not actually blood-guilty, went north into Athole, and relied on his fiancée, Mary Fleming, to make his peace with the Queen.

Mary's gratitude to Huntly and Bothwell, as were all her likes and dislikes, was of an extravagant nature, and they were her constant companions in rides and

walks during the days she remained at Dunbar; she scarcely spoke to, or noticed her husband.

Bothwell, with his reckless indifference, belittled the slaying of Rizzio as "a saucy servant," but his indignation at the treatment of the Queen knew no bounds, and he frequently voiced his disgust at the pusillanimous conduct of Darnley, and hinted at his being the instigator of the whole affair, out of jealousy. The Queen refused to believe this of him, as well she might, and therefore it came as an added shock to her when his co-traitors, furious at his betrayal of them, saw to it that the bond to which the King's signature was attached, was laid before the Queen, and the fact that his own dagger had been left in Rizzio's body was made known to her.

On fleeing over the Border, Morton wrote to the Queen attempting to excuse himself for his guilt, and assuring her that he had been drawn into the plot by the entreaties and threats of the King her husband, at the same time giving such conclusive proof of his guilt and that of his father the Earl of Lennox, that Mary for all time forbade Lennox ever again to appear in her presence.[1]

Mary, with an army now sufficient to overawe all opposition, and stated to be nearly eight thousand strong,[2] returned to Edinburgh, and the Court more or less resumed its normal existence, save only that the Queen resolutely refused to re-inhabit the terror-haunted rooms at Holyrood-house, and preferred to take up temporary residence in a house in the High

[1] Strickland's *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., p. 301.
[2] Knox, *History of the Reformation*, p. 437.

Street, until the bleak edifice of the Castle could be made ready for her use and accouchement.

Before that event took place, she realised the necessity to effect a reconciliation between Bothwell, whom she now recognised as her chief buckler against her enemies, and the Earl of Moray, who had expressed to her his abhorrence of recent events and repudiated those who committed the late heinous crimes,[1] and she pleaded with Bothwell to sink his personal antipathy to her brother in the interests of the peace and security of her Kingdom.

Darnley, although he had betrayed all his other associates, seems to have kept Moray's name entirely out of his denouncements, doubtless for fear of reprisals from this vindictive and powerful man. This, however, did not help him, and in the light of after-events it is probable that, even as early as April, Moray was in negotiation again with the banished Lords who had resolved upon the King's death as soon as opportunity should offer itself, as the penalty for his breach of the solemn "band" into which he had entered with them.

Once, and once only, did the Queen's anger soften towards her recreant husband, and that was when, at the end of May, she made her will in anticipation of her possible demise in her approaching confinement. In that document she left much of her personal jewelry to the King, including "the ring wherewith he married me."

[1] *Melvil's Memoirs.*—How much reliance could be placed on such repudiation is proved by the fact that he sent a special letter on 27th March 1566, through Randolph to Cecil, bespeaking the latter's favour for his "dear friends."

The Earl of Huntly was now Chancellor of Scotland, Bothwell Lord High Admiral, and both, of course, of her Council. It was, by custom, necessary that members of the Council should be present at the accouchement of a reigning Queen, but these two men were alike forbidden to take up residence in the Castle for obvious reasons. Huntly had once been her lover, open and professed, and the aspirant for her hand. Bothwell, there is little doubt, was by this time more or less in love with her, although history credits him with having loved his wife, Jean, with a greater affection than that inspired by any other of the many women with whom his name has been connected—the Queen not excepted. How far such a man could ever "love," may reasonably be doubted, but it cannot be gainsaid that he would be fully alive to the advantages that he derived from the Queen's gratitude and friendliness for him, and that whatever the emotion that quickened his own pulse, his self-satisfaction would lead him to think that her kindness and sweetness meant a kindlier and a softer feeling towards him than was the case.

Be this as it may, she resolutely refused permission for these two of her Councillors to reside in the Castle, but she admitted the King her husband, the Earl of Moray her brother, and the Earl of Argyll married to Moray's sister, to the privilege of residence.

Bothwell, therefore, departed once more to his own Castle of Hermitage on Liddell-side to guard the Border; Huntly was in quarters in Edinburgh. Mary Fleming was away in Athole with her Lethington, awaiting an opportunity to bring him back. Mary

Beaton was now married to Jean Gordon's old lover, Ogilvy of Boyne, but she, Mary Seton, and Mary Sempill, were in attendance in the Castle, and the former had introduced into the intimate privacies of the occasion a distant cousin of her own, Lady Reres, an elderly woman, and a sister of that weird witch-wife the Lady of Bucclench, both of whom were supposed to have had "affairs" with Bothwell in his callow youth. Hardly, in the circumstances, one would think, a very suitable person to be in such an intimate relationship with the young Queen of Scots at the birth of her first baby—so events were to prove.

On the 19th June 1566 the baby was born, and before the sun was high in the heavens Sir James Melvil was speeding on his way to London to announce to Queen Elizabeth the birth of an heir to both Kingdoms. It must have been an intriguing situation to see the wily Scots messenger admitted to the "virgin Queen" at Greenwich, where she received him in audience.

Cecil had announced the dreaded event to her the night before, at supper, and she had burst out in a jealous fury, "The Queen of Scots hath a fair son, and I am but barren stock." (One must not, presumably, ask what she expected in view of her expressed determination "to live and die a virgin Queen"!) She raged to her women for an hour that night, in tears and lamentations, but there was no trace of her dis-ease the next morning when she received Sir James!

"Your glad tidings, Sir," she said, "have given me the utmost joy, and have quite cured me of a sickness which has lasted these fifteen days!"

She promised him speedy settlement of the succession on the new Prince, provided he should be brought up in the Protestant faith, and she dismissed him on his return journey with a gracious and loving message of congratulation to her "sweet sister." A truly Elizabethan cameo, this!

A few days later, the Queen of Scots summoned the Lords of her Council to attend her in her bedchamber. They came: the Earl of Moray "looking through his fingers," but giving no sign of the torment of thwarted ambition and jealous hatred that consumed him; the Earl of Argyll, stout Protestant, and, like all his race but a lukewarm friend to the Stuart line of Kings; the Earl of Mar, a recent Erskine elevation to Moray's old title; the Earl of Huntly, now summoned to the Castle for the first time since the accouchement, with his close friend the Earl of Atholl, and many others; the King, and father, came last and reluctant, it seems, to set his eyes on his offspring.

The Countess of Mar brought in the babe. The Queen, white, and wide-eyed, lying in her great bed, fixed a tragic gaze upon her husband.

"Give me the child," she said, and then holding him out to the King she continued in a steady voice: "My Lord, here I protest unto God, as I shall answer for it at the Great Day of Judgment, this is your son and no other man's son! I am desirous that all here, both ladies and others, bear witness, for he is so much your son that I fear it may be the worse for him hereafter!"

In modern phraseology "a pin could be heard to drop" at this solemn refutation of the cruel slander of her enemies.

MARY had built for her own use within the Castle a suite of apartment which are still distinguished by the Regal Initials of herself and her consort M. H. R. entertwined together in her well-known conjugal Monogram over the portal, See Strickland's Lives of the Queens of Scotland
THE ROOM IN WHICH MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS GAVE BIRTH TO JAMES THE SIXTH.
EDINBVRGH CASTLE
9 AND 10 O'CLOCK

The Queen's Bed-chamber in Edinburgh Castle, the birthplace of James VI. of Scotland and I. of England

From a drawing by Edward Douglas in the collection of Mr F. C. Inglis, Edinburgh

[*Face p.* 140

Darnley looking the epitome of discomfort, as well he might, murmured something about her promise to forgive.

"Aye, my Lord, forgive, but I knew not *then*, when I made that promise, that yours was the hand that struck at me and the babe within me. I might well have died on that bloody night! Yours was the hand—not Fawdonsyde's—that held the pistol at my heart, and yours the hand that struck the life from poor David's body! Oh, shame! I think, my Lord, you have broken my heart!"

In silence the Lords of the Council filed out of the room. What words could they find in such a case?

The Queen's recovery was slow and tedious; one gathers from available reports, that she was sad and weary, that she sailed in one of the ships of her Lord High Admiral, to Alloa House, where she resided for a time as the guest of the Earl of Mar. Always she was accompanied by her brother, Moray, and always that dour man was concerting means whereby he could compass his revenge and destroy the King.

Meanwhile, it is said[1] that Darnley was threatening Moray's life on the ground "that the death of such a traitor would be a public benefit."

In the autumn, whilst at Stirling, Mary yielded to Mary Fleming's repeated petitions, received and pardoned Lethington, and assented to the marriage of her Maid of Honour to that astute and restrained lover. This an accomplished fact, she set about effecting a reconciliation between Lethington and

[1] Strickland's *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., p. 317.

Bothwell, and with such plastic material to work upon she soon achieved her object.

Next Moray and Lethington, the latter fully restored to favour, essayed a more difficult task in endeavouring to secure the Queen's pardon for Morton, Lindsay, and Ruthven. The last named solved the problem so far as he was concerned, by succumbing to his malady at the most convenient moment. Darnley was definitely, and very strongly opposed to the pardon of his whilom companions, because he knew that his life was forfeit to them for his treachery, and so fearful was he of their return that he had it in contemplation to leave the country.

It is about this time that the historian, Buchanan, chooses to date the worst and most unscrupulous of his slanders of the Queen. She lodged for a few days at the Chequer House in Edinburgh for an audit of her revenues, and the sole authority for Buchanan's libels would seem to be the fact that the adjoining house was tenanted by a Mr David Chalmers, a burgess of Edinburgh, who was very friendly with Bothwell, and to whose house that errant noble was in the habit of paying frequent visits.

Beyond the fact of this juxtaposition, there would not appear to be the least reason, and certainly no evidence, upon which to found the scandal in which Buchanan indulged. On the contrary, Du Croc, the French Ambassador, recently accredited and who was then in residence at the Court, has left written testimony that he never knew the Queen more loved, esteemed, and honoured by her own people than then. Yet it is at this time that Buchanan chooses to

voice the lie which asserts that here, at the Chequer House, Bothwell wooed her, and finally, assailing her virtue by force, with the connivance of his elderly one-time paramour, Lady Reres, persuaded or frightened her into acquisition in his own plot to rid her and Scotland of her besotted and craven husband!

Of this utterly ridiculous story published by Buchanan in his *Detectio* the complete disproof exists in the letter of the Lords of the Council to the Queen Mother of France, but this, as has been pointed out by a modern historian,[1] would not be available to the general public:

"Moray when he subsequently brought forward a journal fabricated for the express purpose of misrepresenting the proceedings of his Royal sister, shrewdly calculated that it would be circulated among thousands who could have no means of detecting its falsehoods by the letter of the Privy Council, to which he himself was a party."

In this journal Buchanan stoops to invent the impossible story that in order to indulge her guilty passion for Bothwell, whilst at the Chequer House—

"She sent Lady Reres over the garden wall to fetch Bothwell to her out of his own wife's bed, and goes so far as to affirm 'that the Queen with her own hands let Lady Reres down by a rope for that purpose, but as she was an old woman and very fat, the rope broke and she hurt herself severely.' * * * If the Queen had wished to see Bothwell, her doors would as a matter of course, have been open to him at any hour it pleased her to appoint."[2]

[1] Strickland's *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., p. 329.
[2] *Ibid.*

Du Croc has also utterly refuted a tale which is obviously too absurd for the least credence.

Buchanan wrote this privately at the very time when he was publicly engaged in the preparation of sonorous verses extolling her honour, wisdom, and virtue, for the festivities in connection with the forthcoming christening of Scotland's Prince-Royal!

If, in her extremity, in the daily contemplation of Darnley's excesses—excesses which had blotched his face, and made his body gross and loathsome—she turned to her one loyal friend and found her friendship drifting into something even warmer than friendship, who shall wonder? But if that were so indeed, Mary hid her secret in her own bosom, even from her friend! With all her hopes and fears, hopes for the peace and safety of her Kingdom, fears for her young son, Mary saw the supreme importance of effecting some sort of reconciliation with the King, for it must be remembered that, staunch Romanist that she was, she realised that he must be brought up in the Reformed religion if he was ever to hope to succeed to the English throne.

At the first Privy Council to be held after the Queen's convalescence, and his expressed intention of leaving the Kingdom, she took her husband by the hand and, before the assembled Lords and the French Ambassador, she asked him to state publicly whether she had done him any wrong, or denied him any of his rights, or access to the Prince, his son. Darnley at first refused a direct answer; he stammered, frowned, cursed under his breath, then admitted that the Queen had given him no cause to complain, and

finally in a pet at the dark looks bent upon him on all sides, muttered his excuses: "Madam, adieu! You shall not see my face again for a long space," and hurriedly left the Council Chamber.

It is to be assumed that this flaunting of the Council, this rebuff of the Queen his wife, finally sealed his doom. Moray, Lethington, and others were whispering together as they left the presence. Bothwell, summoned from his Border duties, was made acquainted with the situation, and with Mary's fears that Darnley, if he effected his purpose of retiring to England, might abduct their child. Mary's own supporters, realising that the King was the bitter opponent of their desire for the recall of Morton, now pressed for the latter's pardon, and obtained the Queen's promise that it should be granted after her return from a progress to Jedburgh to hold an Assize Court which was due to take place.

It will be seen that the conspiracy against Darnley began from totally differing motives — Bothwell's party, including Huntly, Argyll, Atholl, and perhaps Lethington, out of mistaken loyalty to the Queen; Moray and the participators in the Rizzio murder, out of revenge.

On the morrow of this peculiar meeting, Bothwell took a hasty leave of the Queen for the purpose of quelling a rising of the Armstrongs and Elliots in his own district. It is certain that he had now resolved in his own mind on Darnley's removal, as the Queen's husband, either by divorce, by banishment to France, or by death, as imperative to her happiness, to the safety of the Kingdom and of the Prince Royal, and no

doubt to the now soaring ambition of James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell!

But for the moment he held his peace; it was necessary first to sound his old enemy and now professed ally, the Earl of Moray, and, for the better protection of both of them, to obtain the added security of the concurrence of the powerful Earl of Morton.

Meanwhile, however, the warring Borderers, the Elliots and the Armstrongs, first required his attention.

It has been recently pointed out[1] that if Mary herself had any very strong desire to rid herself of Darnley's distasteful presence, she need only permit him to retire to France without any of the opposition she showed to the project.

"It would have been easy enough for her to have had him murdered or imprisoned there, through her all-powerful kindred, had she cherished those evil intentions against him of which her calumniators accuse her."

This is obviously so true that one cannot understand why such calumnies ever had the credence of intelligent and thoughtful minds! How could it be imagined that Mary would adopt the tortuous and dangerous method of conspiring with at least a dozen of her subjects to blow up her husband with gunpowder, at such immense trouble to herself, when she could have achieved her object so much more easily by leaving him to his own devices?

[1] Strickland's *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., p. 333.

CHAPTER XI

AT THE BAR OF JUSTICE

Owing to the fresh and serious disturbances which had broken out, the evening of 6th October 1566 saw Bothwell spurring hastily to the Border once more, with a large body of lances, and "French Paris" in personal attendance on the Earl, who had become perhaps the most powerful noble in Scotland. He comes so much into our story in the future that an honest description of the character of this extraordinary man seems called for, and no better or less biased historian can be selected than Fraser-Tytler, who describes Bothwell in the following rather remarkable words:[1]

"So far as this task (the restoration of peace on the Border) went, Bothwell was well fitted for it. He was of high rank, possessed of a daring and martial spirit, and his unshaken attachment to the Queen's interests, at a time when she had suffered from the desertion of almost every other servant, made him a favourite with a Princess who esteemed bravery and fidelity above all other virtues.

"But unfortunately for Mary, he possessed other and more dangerous qualities. His ambition and audacity were unbounded. He was a man of notorious gallantry, and had spent a loose life on the continent, from whence, it was said, he had imported some of its

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., pp. 327, 328.

worst vices. In attaining the objects of his ambition he was perfectly unscrupulous as to the means he employed, and he generally had about him a band of broken and desperate men with whom his office of Border Warden made him familiar; hardened and murderous villains, who were ready on the moment to obey every command of their master.

"In one respect Bothwell was certainly better than many of his brother nobles; there seems to have been little craft or hypocrisy about him, and he made no attempt to conceal his infirmities or vices under the cloak of religion. It is not unlikely that, for this reason, Mary, who had experienced his fidelity to the Crown, was more disposed to trust him in any difficulty than those stern and fanatical leaders who, with religion on their lips, were often equally indifferent to the means which they employed.

"It is certain that from this time she began to treat him with great favour, and to be guided by a preference so predominant that it was not unlikely to be mistaken for a more tender feeling. This partiality for Bothwell was early detected by Moray, Lethington, and their associates; they observed that his vanity was flattered by the favour shown him by his Sovereign, they artfully fanned the flame and encouraged an ambition already daring enough to aspire to a height he had never dreamed of, and it is the opinion of Sir James Melvil, who spoke from personal observation, that Bothwell's plot for the murder of his Sovereign (Darnley) and the possession of the Queen's person had its origin about this time when she despatched him to suppress disturbances in Liddesdale."

This then was the man deputed to uphold the Queen's rule on the English Border, with all the authority of Lieutenant-General and Warden of the Marches, soon after the birth of the Prince.

We have, in the last chapter, seen the sulky, intemperate and cowardly manner in which Darnley behaved after the birth of his son, and there is little doubt that the months immediately following that event were pregnant with real danger both to him and to the Queen. Moray, Morton, and perhaps, as will be seen, in a lesser degree, Lethington, whom he had formally denounced as a principal in Rizzio's murder,[1] were determined to be avenged for his betrayal of them, his accomplices to whom he was formally banded, to the Queen, and the consequences of that betrayal.

There is no doubt that the possibilities of a divorce were seriously debated between the Privy Council and the Queen previous to Bothwell's departure for the Borders, but it is doubtful if anything more than such a step was then in contemplation by any one. Chalmers says otherwise:[2]

"It was at the end of September 1566, when Darnley behaved so absurdly at Holyrood-house, that Murray and Maitland condemned him to the bowstring. The long exposition of the Privy Council to the Queen Mother of France is proof of this resolution."

I cannot, however, accept this Privy Council document[3] as any real *proof* of the assertion, though it contains the remarkable paragraph that—

"the King has no ground for complaint, but on the contrary he has the best reason to look upon himself as one of the most fortunate Princes in Christendom, if he could only know his own happiness, and make

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 227.
[2] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 189.
[3] Keith, p. 350, where it is published from a copy.

proper use of the good fortune which his destiny has placed in his hands."

Now this minute is signed by the Earl of Huntly Chancellor of Scotland, the Earl of Argyll Justice-General, the Earls of Moray, Atholl, Caithness and Rothes, the Archbishop of St Andrews, the Bishops of Galloway, Ross, Orkney and Dunkeld, and by the Secretary of State Lethington, and other officers.

I have stressed the resolution of the Council and its signatories because, although I cannot accept it as *proof* that Moray and Lethington had then already determined upon Darnley's murder, I want to point out that Bothwell, although in constant attendance at Council meetings, was not a signatory to this Council letter to the Queen Mother of France, and all the evidence is against his having any hand or part in the plot against Darnley, until Moray inveigled him into it.

Chalmers says[1] "Murray (*sic*) drew Bothwell into their concert before he set out for Lidisdale," and quotes Goodall for Moray's own acknowledgment of the fact. Morton was also communicated with and agreed, but no details are given of such agreement except the statement that there are "many letters in the State Paper Office which prove it."

This may be so, but though there is suspicion, there appears no definite proof that there was any plot before the arrival of the Court at Craigmillar in November—which will be dealt with in the proper place. The one thing quite certain is that, whether the plot was originated in Edinburgh, or later at

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 189.

Craigmillar, it was to the vengeance of Moray and Lethington, and not to the jealous and self-seeking villainy of the Earl of Bothwell, as has been so often averred, that it owed its origin.

Another quotation from Chalmers[1] may be urged in support of this conclusion:

"The whole detail of the plot was not finally settled till the Queen returned to Craigmillar Castle in November, two months after the conception of the original design. The Queen, having refused to be divorced from Darnley when proposed by Maitland and urged by Bothwell in the presence of Murray, was included as one of the victims of their villainy."

This, I suggest, we shall find to be a well-founded conclusion, but the strong reasons I have given above seem to me to be quite sufficient to absolve Bothwell from any origination of the murderous scheme. I hold no brief for him whatever, and am as assured of his *capability* to originate it, as of his guilt in carrying it out, but it was undoubtedly a part of the considered policy and unswerving ruthlessness of Moray and originated in his scheming brain. His next step would be, and was, to drag the Queen into it and to fasten his own crime upon her and Bothwell when the opportunity arose.

Meanwhile Bothwell had arrived at Hermitage on 9th October, and on the same day the Queen, with her Court and Council, departed from Edinburgh for Jedburgh to hold a series of Justice Courts which had been commanded in August, when she had declared her intention to attend them in person.

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 190.

On the night of 9th October the Queen, with Moray, Lethington, and Argyll and others of her Council in attendance, arrived and halted at Borthwick prior to entering Jedburgh in state, and opening the Justice Court the next morning.

Here came to her in haste a messenger, probably "French Paris," with the news that her Warden of the Border, Bothwell, had already rounded up and captured a number of the turbulent Borderers, but that, being first in the pursuit of a body of the Elliots, he had outstripped his escort and had fired at the leader of the rebels, John Elliot of Park, with his "dag" and wounded him in the thigh. John Elliot had thereupon turned upon his pursuer and with his heavy two-handed sword had dealt him such a severe wound that he was not expected to survive.

This was grievous news; Mary dispatched the messenger on his return journey with messages of sympathy to the wounded man, and to the Countess of Bothwell, and ordered the immediate punishment of his criminal assailant.[1]

She then proceeded on her journey, opened her Justice Courts and presided over them in Jedburgh the following morning, attended by Moray and the Lords of her Council. Calm, collected, beautiful, if somewhat pensive, often tempering the hard measures of her Council with womanly clemency, she continued on the normal business of the Courts of Justice for eight days without leaving Jedburgh at all in the interval.

[1] Birrell in his "Diary" says, "Bothwell was wounded in the hand by Elliot of Park whose head was sent into Edinburgh thereafter."

She frequently mentioned the condition of her Lieutenant-General with tender solicitude for the hurts obtained in her service, and she openly rejoiced on hearing that his wounds were not so severe as had been first reported. Was this the reckless and guilty love that her traducers have said she indulged for Bothwell? If she felt deeper than she showed, she was a fine dissembler—as we know that she was—but no one has recorded any deeper emotion than this womanly and queenly sympathy save Buchanan, and of him and his version I shall write presently, and I hope, prove its utter falsehood.

For an entire week, Queen Mary busied herself with the affairs of Justice and of State, getting daily reports from Hermitage, first that my Lord's condition was by no means fatal, next that his iron constitution was serving him well, and that he was conscious; finally that he was recovering.

But not once did the Queen of Scots swerve from her programme, or leave the town of Jedburgh, until on 15th October, when she gave her commands to the Earls of Moray and Huntly that she would pay a visit of condolence to her wounded Lieutenant and his Lady, and that they were to ride in her train.

I ask you to note the date, 15th October, and she had reached Jedburgh on 9th October. There is ample proof of her presence in that town on the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th of October. Tytler says[1] "the proceedings against the various delinquents brought before her Court occupied her uninterruptedly until the 15th," when she visited Bothwell, and that

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 228.

she then "was accompanied by Moray and others of her officers, in whose presence she communicated with Bothwell; afterwards she returned, on the same day, to Jedburgh."

Lord Scrope informed the English Secretary of State, Cecil,[1] of the visit *on the day it occurred*, and added that she remained but two hours at the Castle.

It is true that Maurice Hewlett, in his delightful *Queen's Quair*, gives her only two days at Jedburgh, "just time enough for the ceremonial business of her coming," and tells of a mad ride to Hermitage, and an impassioned meeting there with her "lover." But *Queen's Quair* is a romance, the author takes a romancer's licence, and ignores the abundant evidence of a week's hard work in Jedburgh.

Now for Mr George Buchanan, Moray's creature, *writing with Moray's knowledge*, the only qualified and acknowledged historian who has dared *deliberately to falsify* a professed history. Moray knew that he lied, for Moray was with his sister all through her Jedburgh visit; he was with her all the way to Liddesdale and back, and with her those two hours with Bothwell!

What says Mr George Buchanan in his *Detectio?* That Mary:

"heard of Bothwell's wound, whereupon she flingeth away like a mad woman, by great journeys in post, in the sharp time of winter, first to Melrose, then to Jedburgh. There, though she heard sure news of his life, yet her affection, impatient of delay, could not temper itself, but needs she must betray her outrageous lust, and in an inconvenient time of the

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Lord Scrope at Carlisle to Cecil.

year, despising all incommodities of the way and weather, and all dangers of thieves she betook herself headlong to her journey."

In this passage alone Buchanan is self-condemned. It was mid-October, not the "sharp time of winter," and the Queen had an escort strong enough to fight an army, so could be in no danger of thieves. There is no mention of the week's work in Jedburgh, or that Moray practically never left her side from Borthwick to Jedburgh, Jedburgh to Hermitage, and from Hermitage back again! My Lord must indeed have "looked through his fingers" when he read and permitted Master George Buchanan to publish his *Detectio!*

"Always standing to the left of the throne and looking to the right," supreme power was getting palpably nearer to the grasp of James Stuart, Earl of Moray, and Bastard of Scotland, when he induced Buchanan to write such obvious fabrications.

Here you have events as they were, and events as they have been said to be, so far as Bothwell's wound and Queen Mary's Assize Court at Jedburgh ordered them. After which digression; on the 15th October, in glad spirits at the good news of the wounded man's progress, Mary set out with Moray, Huntly, and "others of her officers," over the trackless moors to Liddesdale.

When she had arrived at Hermitage, the Queen was loyally and enthusiastically received by Bothwell's retainers, regular troops, and irregular "following" alike; and she sat a moment longer on her horse cheered by the mob of soldiery and graciously acknowledging her rough reception. She was wet

to the skin, for it had been a morning of misty rain, and she was formally, but apparently not very enthusiastically, received by Lady Bothwell, dour Jean Gordon, who always hated her; with some cause it must be conceded!

So, with the formal curtsey of my Lady Bothwell which we may imagine; with the casting of the wet garments, and the donning of some dry clothes; with the offer and acceptance of sadly needed refreshment, and with my Lord Bothwell prepared for "a visit which was undoubtedly a flattering mark of regard paid by a Sovereign to a subject; but to one who was of high rank, and in high office, who had nearly lost his life in the execution of his duty, and who was a favourite with the Queen."—Thus Fraser-Tytler[1] who so gives the visit a true perspective.

For an hour they spoke: of Scotland; of his success with the rebel Borderers; of her journey and the temper of the people; of his convalescence and the prospect of moving him to Jedburgh, where he could have better attention and she the benefit of his counsel.

My Lady stood by the head of the bed; the Earl of Huntly, well content we are told, at the foot of it, his poet's eyes doubtless never leaving the face he made no secret of loving; my Lord Moray—thinking, God knows what treason—gazed out of the window, and now and again drummed a tattoo on the stone window ledge with his fingers.

The Queen talked, and looked, and laughed, a gay little trill of laughter at some pleasant jest from the

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 229.

wounded man. She sat at the side of the great bed, formality lost in womanly sympathy; until at last she gave orders for the return journey. Never for a moment was she alone with the man whom the egregious Buchanan says she "betrayed her outrageous lust" to visit.

She gave him her hand, which he raised to burning lips, his eyes fever-bright with his grievous hurts, and perhaps (who knows?) now with a stronger feeling shining in the deeps of them, and she was gone.

That is all there was in "the visit which was a flattering mark of regard"!

She rode back again, with her nobles and attendants, back in the drenching rain, and through countless morasses, "twenty statute miles," through moss-hags now treacherous in their swollen condition, and they reached Jedburgh with foundered horses, men weary to exhaustion, and a fainting Queen.

In the morning she was in high fever, and distracted Mistress Sempill had summoned every leech in the little town to the aid of the Queen of Scots.

CHAPTER XII

CRAIGMILLAR AND A CHRISTENING

Of her fever "Queen Mary nearly died." There is little doubt, in the light of modern knowledge, that she was *in extremis* from 16th to 27th October, from what would now be diagnosed as rheumatic fever, and that she believed herself to be dying.

It does not require much imagination to see a frail woman—suffering as she had suffered, only just convalescent from a particularly trying child-birth following such a scene as that to which she had been subjected in March, twice riding very many miles in October in pouring rain, and wet to the skin for hours on end during both journeys—falling ill with rheumatic fever after such an experience, and for some ten days her life was despaired of.

Tytler tells us that the "dangerous fever ran its course with alarming rapidity";[1] Lethington ascribed her illness "to distress of mind occasioned by the cruel and ungrateful conduct of the King";[2] Florence MacCunn says that "she fell ill with a sudden mysterious attack, in which she lay for some hours like one dead";[3] Andrew Lang writes "she fell ill on October 17th,

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 229.
[2] Sloan MSS., Brit. Museum, 3199.
[3] *Mary Stuart*, p. 114.

a week before Bothwell's arrival in Jedburgh; on October 25th she was despaired of, and some thought she had passed away. Bothwell arrived in a litter, about October 25th"[1] (please mark—"in a litter"). Lesley, Bishop of Ross, writing to the Archbishop of Glasgow from Jedburgh, 27th October 1566, says, "She expressed her entire resignation to the will of God and declared her constant mind to die in the Catholic Faith"; which is entirely in keeping with all we know of her.

Yet once more the egregious Master George Buchanan—what does he say?—

"She returned to Jedburgh to await Bothwell's arrival, when by their excessive indulgence in their passion, Queen Mary nearly died."

And the noble Earl of Moray permitted *that* to go forth to the world, the Queen having "nearly died" before ever Bothwell arrived in Jedburgh, "in a litter"! Oh verily, when Buchanan wrote *that* the voice was the voice of Jacob, but the hands were the hands of Esau!

If I have laboured these conflicting utterances too much, my apologies are due to my readers. The desire has been to proclaim beyond all possible question that George Buchanan was a clumsy liar, and that my Lord of Moray was the author, and the father of his lies!

To the joy of her subjects, Mary recovered from her sickness. Better far, poor Queen, if she *had* died!

We read that "if there was a recovery of bodily health there was no return to peace of mind."[2] The

[1] *The Mystery of Mary Stuart*, p. 94.
Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 229.

King, ever procrastinating, never came until she was out of danger, when he paid her a perfunctory and formal visit, with guards, horses, and heralds proclaiming His Majesty's state, remained but one single night, and spoke of his intention not to attend the baptism of their son. Monsieur Du Croc, the French Ambassador, wrote of him, "I do not expect, upon several accounts, any good understanding between them."[1]

The Queen was moved by easy stages to Kelso, "much weakened," thence to Dunbar, and finally on 20th November, to Craigmillar Castle. Bothwell, as we have seen, came to Jedburgh "in a litter" about 25th October, but where he lodged and how and when he arrived at Craigmillar is uncertain. Certain it is, that whilst she was in residence there, the Queen's distaste for Darnley grew unbearable. She frequently wished she were dead, spoke of divorce, hesitated, and then declared that divorce was unthinkable because it would illegitimise her son, or at least jeopardise his prospects of the English succession.

By this time she had about her, Bothwell, his head well mended, but his left arm still strapped to his side; Moray, attendant upon events; Lethington, eager for the recall of the Earl of Morton, and for his marriage, which was to follow the Prince's christening about Christmastide; Huntly, nursing his adoration of his much injured Queen, and burning to avenge her slights and unhappiness upon the King; and Argyll, prepared for any politic move that did not threaten danger to himself!

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 229.

One night there was a conference between these Lords; Buchanan says the Queen herself was present and spoke of divorce, then determined to murder her husband and son.—Why the poor babe? But let that pass, and nail another lie to the counter! The Queen *was* present, and the conference certainly proposed a scheme to her "for putting an end to her sorrows, to unite their efforts to secure a divorce between her and her husband, stipulating as a preliminary that she should pardon the Earl of Morton."[1]

She agreed, providing that the divorce should be legal, and not prejudice the rights of her son, and that Darnley should live in a remote part of the country or retire to France, unless he returned to a better mind, when she herself would retire to France and remain there until he acknowledged his faults.

Lethington's reply is on record, and cannot better be given than in his own words:

"Madam, soucy" (from the French, *soucier*) "ye not! We are here of the principal of your Grace's nobility and council, that shall find the moyen that your Majesty shall be quit of him, without prejudice to your son; and albeit my Lord of Moray, here present, be little less scrupulous for a Protestant than your Grace is for ane Papist, I am assured he will look through his fingers thereto, and will behold our doings and say nothing."[2]

The Queen was far from satisfied with this equivocal suggestion, and definitely laid her commands upon the conference that no step should be taken "that laid any

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 230.
[2] Copy in State Paper Office.

spot upon her honour." Lethington reassured her in words upon which no two constructions could possibly be placed:

"Madam, let us to guide this business, among us, and your Grace shall see nothing but good and approval by Parliament."

Tytler says that "it is possible that Mary considered her express command sufficient,"[1] to prevent any illegal act, and so she well might. It *should* have been *quite* sufficient, but she did not know her Bothwell, nor the reckless mind of him!

Bothwell busied himself with affairs, in privy talks with Lethington, next with Argyll; Huntly he knew he held in the hollow of his hand, and could depend upon him to work his will; Moray he abhorred and did not trust, with good reason, and he left that astute schemer to Lethington, who never failed to dangle the bribe of Morton's pardon before him as a bait. At last all were in accord, and each agreed to support the other "in putting forth in ane way or another of the young fool and proud tyrant, the King," and in keeping the doing of it from the Queen's knowledge.

A "band" was drawn up by Lethington, who signed first, but at the bottom of the deed! Bothwell and Huntly, without hesitation, at the top of the signature space; "James Balfour" came in, very small after Huntly's spluttering scrawl. A long gap appeared as if left for Moray's name, between Sir James Balfour's and Lethington's signatures. Bothwell had the deed in his possession for a long space, and showed it, later, to others, Ormiston and Hepburn of Bowton amongst

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 231.

them as they confessed at their trials, with the four signatures and the seals upon it. It is said to have been prepared by Sir James Balfour, and eventually Bothwell returned it for safe keeping to its author; the English ambassador, Randolph, long afterwards declared that it was destroyed by Balfour and Lethington for their own safety. Again Moray had succeeded in effacing himself, and leaving the signing of such a dangerous piece of evidence to others! So the black deed was determined upon, the crime which was to have such fatal consequences for the one person amongst those gathered at Craigmillar Castle, the Queen, who had no part, or lot in it.

There is little doubt that by this time Bothwell's plans were well forward, and that if he had not yet formed the intention forcibly to abduct the Queen after the murder of Darnley, he was already intending a divorce from his wife, and to bring about his marriage to Mary as soon as might be. Her conduct to him was enough to inflame his ambitious and reckless soul. He was her chief friend, her "glorious man," and the one person to whom she felt she could turn with absolute confidence, amongst the self-seekers and traitors by whom she was surrounded.

Both Moray and Lethington had been tried and found wanting; Huntly was equally her friend as much as Bothwell, but he had neither the genius for war, nor the will-power in Council that Bothwell showed, and his chief claim to her regard was a capacity for blind obedience to her wishes and for self-effacement. Argyll was always a mere cypher.

Protestants all, save Huntly, her reliance and her

predilection showed in the fact that she left all the arrangements for the baptism of the young Prince to Bothwell, in spite of his adherence to the Reformed religion, and doubtless also to comply with Elizabeth's conditions.

Queen Elizabeth treated this now imminent event as of the utmost importance. She sent the Earl of Bedford as her envoy from London to attend it, with fine jewels and other gifts from her to her "good sister" and the child who was to be her godson, the Countess of Argyll acting as the English Queen's proxy at the christening. Bedford brought with him a gorgeous font of richly gilt silver for use at the baptismal ceremony, and the English Queen's written instructions to him that if the font were found to be too small, owing to the fact that the child was already six months old, "our good sister has only to keep it for the next."

Bedford and his suite were also instructed, under pain of Royal indignation, in case the Lord Darnley should appear on that occasion, not to make him any reverence, nor to show him more respect in any way than to the simplest gentleman present.

Sir James Melvil was sent to meet the English envoy, and took special pains to inform him correctly upon Scottish affairs. From one who was Moray's personal friend his note is illuminating:[1]

"For it was a perverse time, and the more her friends increased in England, the more practice her enemies made and the manier lies they invented against her."

[1] *Melvil's Memoirs*, p. 170.

With the baptismal preparations well advanced, Bothwell made his next move, and personally asked the Queen's pardon for the Earl of Morton, his kinsman Archibald Douglas of Whittinghame, Lord Lindsay, and the Earl of Ruthven, son of Rizzio's slayer; George Douglas and Kerr of Fawdonsyde, the actual murderers in her own sight, were alone to be excluded from the Queen's clemency.

So the letters of recall were duly dispatched, and Morton, Darnley's bitterest enemy, who had sworn to be revenged upon him for his betrayal, was to be permitted to return to Scotland. Bothwell had his trap well set for the rat he hoped to catch!

The baptism was fixed for 17th December 1566, and the Court moved for the ceremony to Stirling, where so many of the young Prince's ancestors had been christened.

We are told that Mary "received the foreign ambassadors and her noble guests with those winning and delightful manners of which even her enemies felt the fascination,"[1] but at heart she was ill at ease.

Darnley had come to Stirling from his father's house near Glasgow, and his moody, sullen face showed the fear and jealousy with which he regarded the Queen's friendliness with Moray and Bothwell. Although actually in the Palace at the time, the King refused to attend the baptism of his son, and Du Croc severely criticises the fact that he "kept close within his own apartments." The French Ambassador was so incensed at this conduct that though Darnley sent for him, and even offered to come to the Ambassadorial lodging

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 232.

to see him, Du Croc refused both suggestions on the ground that as he was so estranged from the Queen of Scots, he had orders from the French King to hold no conference with him. He even went so far as to say that if Darnley came to see him by one door of his lodging he would "be constrained to go out of the other." Darnley had alienated his every friend and supporter save his own father.

The baptism was a triumphant scene; Master George Buchanan's Latin panegyrics were duly recited, much admired, and the poet highly praised;—his lying *Detectio* was to be his next essay into the flights of fancy!

In spite of the Reformers, the full Catholic rite was used, and Princes of the Roman Church in their gleaming vestments, appeared for the last time at a Royal ceremony in Scotland. The Protestant Lords and the English envoy, the Earl of Bedford, watched the glittering pageant from outside the Chapel doors.

The Queen was delightful as mother and hostess, her eyes shining with joy in her son, she could not sufficiently seek the admiration of the glittering company for him; and the Countess of Mar, who carried him, was repeatedly called upon to unveil him for presentation to some honoured guest. Du Croc reported to Beaton, the English Ambassador in Paris, that she—

"behaved herself admirably well and showed much earnestness in entertaining the goodly company in the best manner, and that this made her in great measure forget her ailments and sorrows."

In the evening there were banquets, fireworks and pageants, and the occasion was perhaps the

greatest, as it was the last, of the young Queen's triumphs.

On Christmas Eve Darnley learned that the pardons had actually been sent to Morton and other Rizzio murderers, and he again became abject in his fear of personal consequences. His mind was quickly made up; his only hope lay in his father, the Earl of Lennox, and their united strong following. Orders were immediately given, therefore, for the King's personal guard of Lennoxes in Stirling, to attend his Majesty to Glasgow.

The Queen had felt some resentment at the strength of this guard, and had more than once remarked that "the town seems full of Lennoxes," so that their sudden withdrawal was at once noticed. By midday the King and his bodyguard had ridden out of Stirling, and were making what speed they might in heavy snowstorms, eastward to Glasgow.

The Earl of Moray, knowing full well what was to be expected on Morton's return to Scotland, judged it to be high time to stand afar off and "look through his fingers" at events with his crafty eyes. So my Lord, with the English envoy, the Earl of Bedford, betook himself to St Andrews "to take the sea air" there and at Burntisland; he watched his confederates carry out the designs to which he was clearly a party, if not, with Bothwell, the actual proposer, and he did not again appear on the scene until those designs had been executed.

Mary meantime had paid a short round of pleasant visits to Drummond Castle, to Tullibardine, and then to Callander House, returning to the now cleansed and redecorated Palace of Holyrood-house about the

middle of January, for the first time since David Rizzio's murder. At all these visits to her nobles she was accompanied by Bothwell, and we may be sure that Master Buchanan's vitriolic pen made fine play with the circumstance.

On reaching his father's Palace, the King was observed to be very seriously ill, his body broke out into sores, and, of course, it was immediately reported that he had been poisoned during the baptismal ceremonies at Stirling Castle. Even in those days, however, smallpox was well known, and was recognised without great difficulty. Darnley was found to be suffering from a particularly virulent attack of the fell disease, to which his bodily condition and gross habit of life had made him susceptible.

The news was conveyed to the Queen, who at once dispatched her own physician to attend him in Glasgow, and one may write it down as certain that, had Queen Mary been as desirous of murdering her husband as Buchanan and her many enemies have endeavoured to prove, even—as has been abundantly demonstrated—going to the length of forging documents purporting to admit her personal guilt, King Henry Darnley would never have been allowed to recover from his severe illness!

Buchanan asserted that the pustules which broke out on the fifth day (a smallpox symptom) were the effects of poison given to him by the Queen before he left Stirling, and an eminent Glasgow physician, Dr Abernethy, administered antidotes for poison, and nearly killed his patient![1] Buchanan stated that "she

[1] Strickland's *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., p. 365.

would allow no physician to go near him." Here is another lie, for the Earl of Bedford wrote:[1]

"The King is now at Glasgow with his father and there lieth full of the small pockes to whom the Queen hath sent her physician."

This physician was the learned Mons. Lusgerie who had attended the Queen herself when she had the malady, and who had prescribed for Queen Elizabeth in similar circumstances at her own request. He had obtained his knowledge of the disease by assisting Mons. Pirnel, the physician to Henry II. of France, yet Buchanan dared to state that "she would allow no physician to go near him." On the 14th, the worst of the danger being over, Mary's pity and humane consideration, even for so poor an object, overcame her disgust and resentment of his conduct, and she wrote him an offer to visit him in his sick-room.

Meantime the Earl of Morton, fresh from his banishment in England, had reached Whittinghame (recently the seat of the late Earl of Balfour), and he had gone into residence there with his cousin, Archibald Douglas, who had been pardoned earlier. To them came Bothwell and Lethington, and there can be no doubt whatever as to the object of this visit by those two signatories of the murder band; even without the definite evidence of Morton's confession when charged with Darnley's murder fifteen years later, a confession repeated on the scaffold a few moments before he was beheaded.

Bothwell opened the discussion in the presence of

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, the Earl of Bedford to Sir W. Cecil, 9th January 1566/7.

Archibald Douglas, and hotly pressed the returned ex-Chancellor to sign the "band"—Morton refused on the ground of his recent banishment and a not unnatural reluctance again to engage in treason so soon.

Bothwell, determined as ever, next brought Lethington to his aid, and perfectly unscrupulous as to the means he employed, he definitely stated that they were but carrying out the Queen's wishes. Still Morton refused to act without the Queen's written orders, and so there was no help for it; by hook or by crook Lethington must get some semblance of a warrant from the Queen, and he and Archibald Douglas travelled to Holyrood-house for the purpose. It was all in vain, however; Mary definitely refused any consent, and all that Douglas was able to take back to my Lord of Morton was a scrap of paper bearing the words: "Schaw to the Earl of Morton that the Queen will hear no speech of the matter appointed to him." To this Douglas swore, "as God shall be my judge," when he was examined and tortured.

This was on 20th January, and on the 22nd Mary departed on her promised visit to her husband in Glasgow. He was now mending from his sickness, but was retarded in his convalescence by his knowledge of his greatest enemy's nearness. Craven as ever, he saw in his wife's humane visit, an opportunity to seek her aid and protection against the foes who now encompassed him on every side, as he well knew.

So, on learning of her approach, Lennox dispatched an equerry, Crawford of Jordanhill, to meet her cavalcade. Crawford assured the Queen that his

James Douglas, 4th Earl of Morton

From a painting in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery

[*Face p.* 170

master, the Earl of Lennox, would have attended in person to welcome her, but feared her displeasure.

The Queen's answer was brief and to the point; icy cold her look and words: "Tell your master that against fear there is no medicine"; and passed on to the King's apartment.

It was a painful ordeal; one that she must have steeled herself to the utmost to endure, for we read that it was impossible to stay with him more than two hours at a time. Those two hours must have seemed two years to her sensitive spirit!

It was evening, and a bitterly cold January, hence all windows were fast and a fire was burning. The air was heavy, sour, and tainted, and the patient a living mass of putrefaction. Lying in his great bed, close within drawn curtains, his face covered with a "taffeta mask" to hide its repulsive appearance, Darnley was tearfully excited by her visit. Her own physician sat at his side, and Mary took a seat at the bed-foot.

He was like a querulous, petulant child; begged her to give him his food, to stay with him by night, pouring out his assurances of affection, begging for her pardon and for her love, desperately afraid and eagerly hopeful by turns, protesting his repentance and pleading his youth, calling her his only friend—and so on to nauseation.

The Queen reminded him of his complaints and suspicions at Stirling, and spoke of his design to go to France. What had he to complain of? In what had she ever failed him?

He again sobbed out his plaint that he was "so young," charged her with being cold to him when she could be so warm to others, said that he knew that

plots were being hatched against his life, and that he feared Morton, finally begged that all things might be as they had been before Rizzio's death, and that they might live together again as husband and wife. Coldly, reluctantly, the Queen answered that she would think upon it, but that meantime it was necessary that he should first be cleansed of his sickness. She then suggested his transference to Craigmillar, and added that she had brought a litter in her train, in case he should choose to wish for a change of air and scene.

As to Morton, she went on, she had laid such commands upon that Lord, and others, which would protect him, even if, as she could not think, they wished him ill. Again the sick man broke into protestations:

"So that you bear me company, and live with me again at bed and board, I care not for ill-wishers. As for yourself, my Mary, I would never think that you, who are my own proper flesh, would essay to do me hurt, and if others attempt such, they will find I shall sell my safety dear, unless they take me sleeping."

Brave words—poor fool!

Strickland[1] makes a strong point of the entire reconciliation between the Royal couple and suggests that the Queen was as much in love with him the night before he was murdered as she was when she married him. I cannot go so far as that, or believe in Darnley's sick-bed protestation except on the assumption that "When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be," but Strickland[2] gives a clear picture of Darnley's trust in his wife and Queen:

[1] *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., pp. 374 *et seq.* [2] *Ibid.*, vol i., p. 375.

"The eager craving of poor Darnley on his bed of sickness for the company of her he was wont to desert for days and weeks together, shows he had no mistrust of her. He had said she was a true princess and he would stake his life on her fidelity of word and deed."

Now one may say at once, that Mary made a fatal and ghastly mistake in suggesting this recuperative visit to Craigmillar to her husband. It has given her enemies and detractors a weapon which they have never relinquished, and never will relinquish. It all *looks* so to fit in, so very simple to the prurient mind: "Of course, she was in love with Bothwell, and already his mistress; Bothwell had plotted her husband's murder, she was a party to the plot, so she beguiled her victim to place himself absolutely within her power, and she murdered him as surely as if hers had been the hand that fired the fuse, or that strangled the sick man." So runs the specious argument.

What then about her express orders, and her *right* to expect these orders to be implicitly obeyed? Everything that is known of Mary's character—where it has not been deliberately falsified by chroniclers such as Buchanan—gives the lie to the charge; and if the charge could possibly be true, why does it need to be bolstered up by false evidence as it is proved to have been time and again? If true, why the need for altered or entirely forged documents, as some of the "casket letters" are now known to be? and if *some* are forged may not all be so that were incriminating?

That Queen Mary was bitterly unhappy at this tragic period of her life is not to be denied. Intensely

human and soft-hearted, intensely loving and proud in what she had hoped was the love of her life for the glittering young Prince, who had seemed a heaven-sent god in her hour of need, in fifteen short months she had seen her "god" change before her eyes into a drunken, beastly, bloated sot. She had known him to charge her with unthinkable immorality at a time when she was carrying his own child, and to assist in the murder of a menial before her eyes as her paramour! She had witnessed his craven fear, and had seen written proof of his blood-guilt and his betrayal of his own accomplices.

Her misery and horror of him may be imagined, and if she felt other than disgust at the contemptible creature whom she had made "King," she was more than human. If she was already half in love with his very antithesis, Bothwell, who had saved her once from her husband's party, had since offered and nearly lost his life in her service, and by whom alone she was at that moment preserved in her power and on her throne, it is scarcely to be wondered at; but if so, it was without knowledge of his intended crime, and with certain but unfounded belief that Bothwell would regard her wishes as binding, and would extend his protection to her husband, so long as she so ordered.

Once more the Queen's kindly heart played her traitor!

She gave the King "some sort of promise to forgive and forget" when his sickness should be past, and a few days later she tenderly transported him by short stages, from Glasgow to Edinburgh — his "taffeta mask" preserving his disfigured features from the public gaze.

He was carefully wrapped in a fur coat to protect him from the cold, carried in a litter slung between two horses to avoid jolting, and two days' delay occurred on the journey because of inclement weather. Such was the Queen's care of the husband whom "she was about to murder"! Strickland rightly says:[1]

"A very considerable outlay in gunpowder might have been saved, as well as the lives of several * * * and all the publicity attending a melodramatic murder, if Mary had been less anxious to preserve her husband from the cold air, which to a person in his state would have been as formidable as the poniard of an assassin. * * * Let common sense decide whether these considerate cares were dictated by a desire of preserving or extinguishing the feeble spark of life."

Craigmillar Castle had been suggested as a convalescent home for Darnley, but we know from Crawford's depositions taken at York two years later, when the murder was fully enquired into by Queen Elizabeth's orders, that Darnley had, not unnaturally, objected to that location, and it was decided that he should be lodged in the suburb of Kirk o' Field, in a house adjoining the residence of the Duke of Châtelherault, the Queen's cousin, within the monastery of the Black Friars; a pleasant and airy site, where rapid convalescence could be looked for, and was far more likely to be obtained, than in the low-lying Palace of Holyrood-house.

As the York trial does not come into our story, it will be fitting here to give its final finding on this point, to show how utterly unworthy were the efforts

[1] *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i., p. 379.

of the Queen's traducers to fasten any guilt of the murder upon her, in spite of the evidence of one of the chief of the conspirators, Moray himself, who brought the charge against his sister and Queen; in spite of perjured evidence, and the production of documents which were alleged to be found in Queen Mary's private casket, many of which have since been clearly proved to be forgeries beyond any shadow of doubt. Here is that part of the finding, delivered by the Secretary of State for England, Cecil, for his mistress, Queen Elizabeth:

"He declared that, with regard to Queen Mary, nothing had been produced or shown by them" (Moray and her accusers) "against the Queen, their Sovereign, which should induce the Queen of England, for anything yet seen, to conceive an ill-opinion of her good sister."

If ever there was a clear acquittal, where every possible desire existed to prove the defendant guilty, from Moray downwards amongst her own countrymen, it is given in these words of an alien Queen!

CHAPTER XIII

THE TRAGEDY OF KIRK O' FIELD

WHAT a wealth of conflicting feelings is conjured up by this rather commonplace name, at one time applied to a small suburb of Edinburgh, which was situated on the south side of the city where the ground rises steeply from the Cowgate and the Nether Bow.

Originally this little cluster of half-ruined houses, and the wholly ruined Collegiate Church of St Mary-in-the-Fields, lay just outside the city walls, and had in earlier days formed the Dominican Monastery of the Black Friars. In 1530, or thereabouts, however, several of the houses had been rebuilt or reconditioned, and were tenanted by the Prebendaries and the Provost of the Collegiate Church, then designated in contemporary deeds "The College Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in-the-Fields within the walls of the burgh of Edinburgh," which show that the town wall had been extended to take in the Church and the house on the north; but the destruction of religious houses some thirty years after the extension, had again left this wall in a similarly dilapidated condition on the south side.

The Duke of Châtelherault, the Queen's cousin, had, a few years before, been granted part of the grounds of Kirk o' Field, and had erected a rather

imposing mansion thereon, which he had named Hamilton House, but beyond the fact that it was the only considerable edifice in the neighbourhood, it has no part or significance in events. Buchanan alleges otherwise, but like nearly all his statements, as I think I have proved, no credence can be safely attached to his story of ruffians stealing out from Hamilton House to assist in the murder.

By this time the name "Kirk o' Field," from being the name of the locality, had, by custom, become applied to the only existing important building within the old Monastery precincts, other than the new Hamilton House; and in the town wall there was an entry gate or "port" known as the Kirk o' Field Port, which gave access to two thoroughfares, Potter's Row on the right when entering the far gate, and Thieves Row on the left. The origin of these names is lost in antiquity, but appears to be biblical; one writer has made the ridiculous suggestion that they show the vileness of the locality! The house selected for Darnley's convalescence was on the left of Thieves Row with an entry-gate through the wall into the row, and another, opposite, into some considerable garden on the east; the house would appear to have had no other connection with this garden than the entry-gate. Darnley's house had its own small enclosed garden on the *north* side, which had been formed out of the more spacious garden of the Black Friars Monastery. Such was the general position of the building to which Queen Mary conveyed the King to recuperate after his illness.

One peculiar fact is recorded. Though this house

is stated to have belonged to Robert Balfour, a brother of Sir James Balfour in whose hands the murder "band" remained for some time, and the Provost of the Collegiate Church, "the inside of the house had been furnished with the Huntly tapestries from Strathbogie, Turkey carpets and beds of State"; but if this is true, whence did they come? Mary had stripped Strathbogie when the old "Cock o' the North" had died, and she had seized his belongings, but what were they doing in the house of a mere country gentleman? Chalmers says that it had been "fitted up as an infirmary under the direction, no doubt, of the Queen's physician."[1] It is abundantly clear, however, that furnishings could not have been conveyed thither specially for the King's visit, for the house had been put to its purpose as a convalescent home almost at a moment's notice, and as it stood. It is far more probable that it was already one of the residences acquired some time before for the Queen's use after the Rizzio murder, when she was so reluctant to live at Holyrood, and this would account for her selection of it to shelter her now recovering patient. There is *no record* of it having been specially rented for the purpose.

Now as to the interior, so far as we know it: the house was of two stories; built, as so many houses then were, on arched vaults which were probably open to the garden on the one side, and, through a small cellar and the gate, into Thieves Row on the other. The lower chamber, above these vaults, was reserved to the Queen for a bedroom, and could be entered either from

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 204.

the garden—presumably by a short stair—or from a hall or passage. Immediately above this was Darnley's sick-chamber, and two tiny rooms for his servants, access to which was obtained by a "small turnpike stair." Darnley's page, Taylor, slept in the same room with his master.

There was also a presence-chamber or state-room in the house, for the carefully kept *Royal Wardrobe Book* gives full inventories of all the furnishings of the rooms, and mentions "a dais for the King's hall, of black velvet with double draperies." Why a presence-chamber if Darnley was only sent there to be murdered? But this item seems to bear out my previous suggestion that Kirk o' Field was already a temporary royal residence of the Queen.

To the house which I have attempted to describe—somewhat minutely, for the details are important—Mary brought her sick husband on the last day of January 1566/7. There was a constant stream of people, courtiers, servants, and others, filling the house for some days. She nursed her husband assiduously, and certainly seems to have slept in her own chamber below the King's, on the nights of the 5th and 7th of February, and probably on the 8th. Sunday the 9th was the day appointed for the marriage of one of her servants, Sebastian, at Holyrood, and the Queen had promised to provide a masque in his honour the same night, which would continue to a late hour.

Now it is certain that Bothwell was well aware both of the forthcoming marriage and the masque, for he was a bidden guest at the latter, and actually danced with the Queen. This was the occasion that he chose

for the execution of his fell purpose, when, he thought, he could easily enough provide himself with an alibi which would be unassailable. There is no doubt that his accomplices were also fully aware of the intention, and the date fixed for performance of it.

Let us recall the names of the definitely guilty persons. Bothwell, Lethington, and Sir James Balfour, of the early conspirators, with the Earls of Morton, Huntly, Argyll, and Caithness, the Archbishop of St Andrews, and Archibald Douglas, as subsequently agreeing to assist the chief plotters—these also were culpably guilty;—Moray, without doubt well aware of the plot, had, as usual, gone away and left the execution of it to the others; or as Tytler puts it,[1] "his superior sagacity enabled him to avoid any direct connection with the atrocious design which they now hurried on to its accomplishment."

Now there is only one thing very certain with regard to that particular Sunday, 9th February, which is that every authority and account seems at variance. To give the principal, one says that Darnley was lying in his great bed, his face still covered with his taffeta mask; another that he had ordered his horses to go riding at five in the morning the following day! One says that the Queen spent all day with him until the evening, when she remarked that she must not forget Sebastian's masque, and "after taking farewell and embracing him" (what about the taffeta mask?) "left the house with her suite"; and another says that "between nine and ten o'clock at night, after supping with the Bishop of the Isles, Huntly, Cassillis and

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 237.

Bothwell, *she was on her way to Kirk o' Field with lighted torches*," and gives a weird account of Bothwell with pack-horses laden with gunpowder, stealing behind her to blow up the house! (What about the masque?) One account says that "French Paris" laid the powder in her own bedroom, and that when she caught sight of him she exclaimed "Jesus, Paris, how black you are!" Another (and the only possible theory, for the house was so destroyed that not even the arched vaults remained) is that the powder was placed in bags in the cellars, where of course no one could see it. The idea that it was piled up in the Queen's bedroom is grotesque! One account says that the explosion took place at 10 a.m., another at 2 a.m. Birrell says that the King was blown up with the house, and if he had not been cruelly strangled with his garters, "*after he fell out of the air*" he would have lived! Sir James Melvil says that he was strangled in a low stable by a napkin thrust into his mouth; Lennox makes the interesting addition that the napkin was first "stipt in vinegar," a nice detail doubtless, but it is difficult to see the reason for the vinegar, except for suffocation.

Well, let us endeavour to reconstruct what probably *did* happen, from amongst all this mass of conflicting evidence.

Undoubtedly Mary was feeling much more sympathetic and friendly towards her husband, as a result of her two weeks' personal care of him; always swayed by her emotions, her anger and disgust at his former conduct had been swallowed up in pity for his weakness and his terrible illness, and the repentance

he was showing appealed particularly to her sensitive spirit and affectionate nature; so that her reconciliation to him appears to have been almost complete by the Sunday of Sebastian's wedding, and she spent the greater part of that day in the sick-chamber.

The scene before the departure of the Queen has been well described, and may be adopted here as a fair account of it.[1] The room was lit by firelight and a few wax candles; the Strathbogie tapestries on the walls would be strangely familiar to one of its occupants, for the Earls of Huntly, Bothwell, and Cassillis were playing at dice on a little table covered in green velvet,[2] in the window embrasure. On a violet-brown and gold bed of state,[2] which had once belonged to the Queen Mother, Mary of Guise, and had been given to the King in September, just before Mary's departure to hold her Assize Court at Jedburgh, was Darnley, in his taffeta mask. On a high chair, covered with purple velvet,[2] and set beside the bed, sat the Queen, "in her gentlest mood, talking low and familiarly with her husband." In one corner of the room was a big bath, covered in primitive fashion, with an old wooden door.

Early in the evening—perhaps about nine o'clock—she left him in the care of his personal attendants, as he had been left several nights previously; Taylor, his page, slept in his room; Nelson, his valet, would, of course, prepare him for the night; two other servants slept in the adjoining tiny rooms previously described, and "French Paris," loaned to the Queen by Bothwell

[1] MacCunn's *Mary Stuart*, p. 128.

[2] All these are mentioned in the *Royal Wardrobe Book*.

as an additional attendant, doubtless for sinister reasons of his own, also remained in Kirk o' Field.

"The Queen departed with her train," and in it, doubtless, rode Bothwell, Huntly, and Cassillis, to attend the masque at Holyrood. Doubtless, too, "between nine and ten o'clock she was on her way *from* (certainly not *to*) Kirk o' Field, with lighted torches," but equally certainly she could not have supped with the Bishop of the Isles, Huntly, Cassillis and Bothwell, for they had been with Darnley all the evening and arrived to take part in the masque at Holyrood before ten. They stayed until midnight, when the Queen sought her own apartments and retired for the night.

Now a short retrogression is necessary. The many and entirely contradictory statements of "French Paris" have been utterly discredited by Andrew Lang and others, and cannot be relied upon in any particular; and it must be remembered that they were extracted from him under torture, when he would say anything he was required to say, to implicate the Queen and lessen his own agony.

About five o'clock, in the dark of a February night, and whilst Darnley was holding the levee in his sick-room which has been described, several men, amongst them Hepburn of Bowton, Hay of Tallo, Powrie, Hob Ormistoun, and his nephew Ormistoun of Ormistoun, all of whom later made some sort of confession and were executed for the crime, arrived by the garden entrance to Kirk o' Field, with bags of powder, which were laid in the *cellar* under the arched vaults (otherwise the arching of the vaults would not

have been destroyed, as it was, so that "there was not one stone above another, but all carried away or dung in dross to the very groundstone").[1] The mine laid, a train was laid from it, and connected with a "lunt" or slow match; all was now in readiness.

The conspirators stole away, leaving only "French Paris" actually in the King's chamber, and one other on the watch for the Queen's departure, and the return of the arch-conspirator, Bothwell.

The evidence of Bothwell's servants takes up the tale and gives a clear picture of his movements.

Leaving the masque with the Queen, and attending her to her chamber, he stayed for some time, as the custom was, in conversation with her. Her ladies, and possibly other privileged nobles would, of course, be present also.

The moment he was released, he hastened to his own apartments, rapidly changed his gala garments for coarser clothes and what we should now term a cavalry cloak, and, attended only by two servants, hurried out to Kirk o' Field.

As he approached the Kirk o' Field Port, the little party was challenged by one of the conspirators left on the watch, but Bothwell was quickly recognised and he passed on, apparently to collect the other participators in the crime, known to have been present at the actual firing of the powder. Bothwell was certainly accompanied by Hepburn of Bowton and Hay of Tallo, possibly by others when they were met by "French Paris."

It was now two o'clock on a severe winter morning,

[1] Keith, vol. i., p. cii.

still and cold, and there was no sign of life in the vicinity, but without doubt a number of armed men in Bothwell's service were hidden in the gardens and enclosures east and west of Thieves Row.

The conspirators disappeared into the garden of Kirk o' Field House, and shortly reappeared in haste. A pause, then a blinding flash and a deafening explosion shook the houses at considerable distance; scared citizens dashing to doors and windows to ascertain what was happening, stated that they saw several small parties of armed men scurrying away in the direction of the city. Bothwell and his friends certainly re-entered it by the Nether Bow Port, and were recognised.

Exactly what happened at Kirk o' Field just before the explosion will never be known, and, as I have said, accounts of Darnley's actual end are conflicting in the extreme, but one clear fact stands out. All the five actual murderers present who were, later, executed for the crime, definitely agreed on one point—they knew nothing of any strangling of the King!

Yet Nelson, Darnley's valet, escaped by the door into Thieves Row *before* the explosion took place, and Darnley's body and that of his page, Taylor, were found, the boy stripped almost naked, the King's body clad only in his shirt, and with his furred pelisse or dressing-gown beside him in the garden, across the same row and nearly a hundred yards from the ruins of the house. Beside the body was a single satin mule or slipper, which was afterwards found to belong to Archibald Douglas.

It would, presumably, not be impossible for the

force of the explosion, that left not one stone of the house standing upon another, to hurl two human bodies a hundred yards, but the curious fact is that neither body bore the slightest trace of wound or singeing, nor was the meagre clothing of either blackened by the explosion.

Yet the murderers knew nothing of any strangling!

Did the two victims, hurrying away from the doomed house after the valet Nelson, fall into the hands of one or the other of the parties of armed men seen by the citizens who looked out of their windows or doors? Did Archibald Douglas, accompanying one of such parties of men, take the flying King and his servant into his own hands and strangle them on the spot? either with or without the "garters" which Birrell's curious account says were used to cruelly do them to death after they "fell out of the air," though no garters were found!

Who can say? All that is certain is that there were two dead bodies, almost naked, just as they left their beds, close together in a garden, a hundred yards from the ruins of the house, but without scathe or mark upon them.

May Croket (or Mistress Stirling) and Barbara Mertine, two women of the vicinity, being examined the very next day, said they saw eleven men pass up the Cowgate and down the Black Friars Wynd after the explosion; the former woman stated that she caught one of them by the cloak, which was of silk, and cried out to know what and where "the crack" was. One of them stated that she heard the King, in a stifled voice, cry "Pity me, kinsman, for the sake of Him

who pitied the world!" His kinsman was Archibald Douglas, and Archibald Douglas's satin slipper was found near the body; but what was Archibald Douglas doing in satin slippers, out-of-doors, and so far away from his lodgings on a February night?

Douglas admitted that "he was at the deed doing" in person, with Bothwell and Huntly; that admission was made to the Earl of Morton, fourteen years later, when Douglas had fled from justice into England. Douglas was later acquitted of the murder, but if he admitted *being* "at the deed doing" why not admit the strangulation also, if he were guilty of it?

Well—whatever the manner of his death, and who the actual author of it—here you have the murder of a King, and, from what we know of the character of that King, a still more pitiable event, the slaying of an innocent boy; bodies of men-at-arms, hurrying back to Edinburgh and safety, and my Lord Bothwell with two armed companions, stealing through the Nether Bow at two o'clock on a winter's morning!

Yet my Lord of Bothwell was, to all outward seeming, sleeping peacefully in his usual bed in Holyrood Palace, when a frantic servant knocked him up and told him that the King's Grace and his house had been blown into the air with powder.

"Oh, fie! Here's treason!" quoth my Lord Bothwell—and we learn that the Queen had a new-laid egg for breakfast![1] What utter nonsense!

[1] MacCunn's *Mary Stuart*, p. 134.

CHAPTER XIV

DOUBTS AND FEARS

PERHAPS to any believer in Queen Mary's own innocence of the crime, the period immediately following the murder of Darnley is the most difficult to defend, or even to condone, and I frankly admit this difficulty.

For four days she kept to her chamber, and saw no one; it cannot be said that she greatly mourned her graceless husband, for she despised him too much for that; nor can it be believed that she had any doubt as to the personality of the murderers. She was aware at Craigmillar of the desire of her nobles and principal advisers to rid her of his intolerable society, and the menace to the Kingdom; she must have known also that the chief amongst the conspirators was her reckless and unscrupulous Warden of the Marches, Bothwell.

We may, without straining credulity too far, credit her with the belief, nay the absolute confidence, that her orders would be implicitly obeyed, and that Bothwell, who had never yet failed her in any single instance since she called him to her aid, would, if need be, protect Darnley from his enemies, rather than encompass his destruction, unless she herself desired it.

Mary had a clarity of vision far above the average, and, once the deed was done, it would come to her

in a blinding flash, not only who was the instigator, nay the perpetrator of it, but quite possibly also, the real reason why the murder was committed.

Bothwell was no carpet-knight, and his reputation in love and war, and his utter ruthlessness in both, were such that it is scarcely conceivable that his dawning love for her, or his lust for her person, had not been apparent to her in the months of her close association with him as her chief counsellor since the christening of the Prince. I have said previously, and I think that to any fair-minded person, it has been abundantly proven, that no tittle of *reliable* evidence exists that such intimacy was ever of a guilty nature, any more than the equally groundless jealousy of Darnley for Rizzio had any foundation in guilt. The twentieth-century reader, too, must remember the difference in the manners and customs of the times from those of the present day.

They were wild times, cruel times, when an inconvenient spouse—such as Anne Boleyn or Amy Robsart had proved to King Henry VIII. and Leicester respectively—or a surplus admirer like Essex, was quite easy for a reigning sovereign to dispose of by other means than personally imbruing hands in blood; and in the proof of Darnley's guilt of the murder of Rizzio, and his subsequent wild conduct, Mary had quite enough against her husband to charge him, King-Consort though he was, with treason without the slightest danger to herself or Bothwell, had she wished, and had a guilty intrigue with the latter made such a course desirable.

That Mary's love for her dissolute husband was

entirely destroyed by his conduct in the murder of Rizzio would be natural enough, and those who so strongly condemn her for her subsequent marriage to Darnley's murderer entirely lose sight of the fact that, blood-guilty as he undoubtedly was, he was, in her eyes, merely the slayer of another murderer who was also a menace to her peace, and an insufferable torture to her sensitive soul. Bothwell was at least a *man*, and a man to whom she owed her present safety, if not her very life.

So her four days of seclusion and horror ended, Mary resumed her interest in affairs and went on a visit to Seton Castle again, where also went the Lords of her Council, without some of whom she was never permitted to travel. Bothwell, Huntly, Argyll, Lethington and the Archbishop of St Andrews, all undoubtedly more or less participators in the recent crime, thus accompanied her. We have, necessarily, no evidence that any of them were reproached in any way by the Queen, but the fact should be remembered that there was not a single one of her principal friends and advisers who was not equally guilty. It must be assumed, therefore, that she could not have done otherwise than ignore and thereby appear tacitly to condone their part in the late King's "removal."

Meantime during the four days of her seclusion, events had moved rather rapidly. At Kirk o' Field crowds had naturally gathered, in the dawn of the day following the murder, and the morbidly curious had viewed the body of the dead King lying stark in the garden beyond Thieves Row. With the dawn, however, a party of hackbutters under the personal

command of the Earl of Bothwell, who was clad in complete mail, marched on to the scene, drove back the sightseers and removed the bodies to Hamilton House, there to await the orders of the Privy Council.

On the Wednesday after the murder, a Proclamation was issued offering a reward of two thousand pounds for information that would lead to the apprehension of the guilty persons, and this was immediately followed by an anonymous placard fixed to the door of the common gaol, the Tolbooth, which denounced the Earl of Bothwell, David Chambers, and Sir James Balfour as the murderers.

In the nights, strange and unrecognisable voices were heard charging the same persons with the King's slaughter, and calling upon the Queen to bring them to justice. The populace of Edinburgh would take no denial, and again and again the fixing of placards incriminating Bothwell was repeated. On the Friday following the murder, 14th February, the late King's body was privately interred in the Royal Chapel at Holyrood. On the 20th Darnley's father, the Earl of Lennox, wrote a letter to the Queen formally charging Bothwell, and begging her to order the arrest of all the suspected persons, and an investigation into the circumstances of the deed.

Mary, in terror of the possible loss of the one man upon whom she felt she must depend, fearing that the result of an impeachment must fall on all her advisers, without a single friend who was not implicated in the murder (and it must not be forgotten that the murder itself, however contrary to her wishes and

commands, was committed by her friends in the mistaken idea that it was necessary to her safety and peace of mind), took no strong action, and made no definite move to discover the guilty persons, other than to offer the reward.

Affairs of State were still directed by the Council, of which Bothwell, Lethington, Argyll, and Huntly were the most prominent members, and it was these Lords who entertained Queen Elizabeth's envoy, whom she had sent to condole with the Queen of Scots: for at this time both Moray and Morton were "lying low" in their country retreats.

Other placards were now being freely exhibited in the streets, some having the Queen's initials, "M. R.," upon them, with a hand holding a naked sword. Others with Bothwell's initials, "J. H.," showed sword blades surrounding his heraldic achievements. It was imperative that something should be done to assuage the temper of the Edinburgh populace, which was becoming clamorous. The Queen therefore agreed to the suggestion of Queen Elizabeth, through her envoy, Killigrew, that the persons being publicly denounced should be put upon their trial, and on 23rd March she wrote to the Earl of Lennox to the same effect, and invited him to be present "if it suited his convenience and leisure."

On the following day the Council met and appointed 12th April as the day of assize for the Earl of Bothwell and, by the curious spirit of contradiction which seems to have overlaid every occurrence of these few months, one of the signatories to this order was the Earl of Bothwell himself!

Bothwell was, however, very far from being at ease, or his own swaggering, confident self. We are told that whenever anyone addressed him his hand strayed to the hilt of his dagger,[1] and fifty of his moss-troopers attended him every time he rode through the streets of Edinburgh, where the post of Constable of the Castle had recently been bestowed upon him in place of the Earl of Mar.

Morton had been restored to his forfeited lands and honours, and was now in residence at Tantallon Castle. Moray judged it safer to be out of the way in order that events might take their course, and Bothwell play into his hands, and he received permission to visit France. There appeared to be no special reason for him to absent himself at such a serious crisis in the affairs of his country and his Queen, other than, perhaps, jealousy of Bothwell's increasing power and importance, and it is very probable that he considered the trend of events likely to bring about the ruin both of his rival and of his sister, and pave his own way to absolute power. He had a calculating mind, and his calculations were well-founded. He left Scotland on 9th April 1567, three days before Bothwell's trial.

What can one say of that travesty of justice? The Court was presided over by the Earl of Argyll, the jury which was empanelled consisted of his peers, and most of them were in the conspiracy with him, or at least had a foreknowledge of the intent. The whole proceedings were in the hands of Morton, Huntly, and Lethington.

The principal witness against Bothwell was, of

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Drury to Cecil, 28th February 1566/7.

course, the Earl of Lennox, who had been summoned to appear and make good his accusations, and he arrived at Linlithgow the day before that appointed for the trial with a small band of personal friends and followers, only to learn that he must not be accompanied by more than six persons when he came to the Court.

Meanwhile over four thousand of Bothwell's troopers filled the city on the day of the assize, and when he rode from Holyrood he had a guard of two hundred horsemen.

Lennox, acting wisely, contented himself with a mere remonstrance by a servant, that it was useless to appear singly against an opponent who commanded the town and Castle, and in the absence of other evidence against him, Bothwell was unanimously acquitted!

He immediately issued a "cartel of defiance" offering to fight anyone (not being a defamed person) and to prove upon his body his innocence of any hand in the King's death. Then followed a Parliament that lasted five days, and the Acts passed by that session show clearly how everything that was happening was by order of the powerful band of Darnley's slayers, and that no one else had any influence over the measures which were enacted.

The three Estates confirmed the verdict of the jury which had tried Bothwell, and approved his acquittal; enquiry was ordered into the charges brought against him, and their authors were to be proceeded against. All laws or enactments were abolished which affected the lives of Protestants—and it must be remembered that the conspirators, save Huntly, were all of the

Reformed religion;—and a provision was made for poor ministers of the Protestant Church, with other concessions to that establishment.

The forfeited estates of Huntly were restored to him, and gifts of lands were made to Moray, Morton, Lethington and others; whilst finally a strong proclamation was made against the placards which were still being exhibited in the streets. One of these latter, with her initials above it, now showed the Queen as a Siren or Mermaid, naked to the waist, fish-tailed and with a horrible wanton leer in malignant eyes!

The Queen readily enough gave her assent to all the enactments of the Parliament and this readiness has been accounted against her for personal guilt, but what else could she do, in any case? If the three Estates of Scotland unanimously passed such bills, she had no alternative, but I do not suggest that she would have acted otherwise even had it been possible. The benefited nobles were all her friends, and however they may have erred, their crime, although contrary to her commands so definitely expressed at Craigmillar, had, as has been said previously, been committed solely in what they considered to be her interests, and those of Scotland.

Bothwell was now, of course, all-powerful, for all his fellow-conspirators, save only Moray, realised that in him lay their greatest hope of safety. He held their "band" in his own possession; Parliament, all the military forces of Scotland, nay the very Queen herself, must respond entirely at his imperious will, and only Moray stood aloof. The Earl of Moray invariably so ordered his conduct that he left "the

day before" and returned "the day after" any event in which he was closely interested. He was to do so once again!

On the evening that Parliament rose from the special session to consider the situation, as it was affected by the murder of the King and the trial of the Earl of Bothwell, the latter had invited a number of the principal nobility to a sumptuous supper at a tavern kept by one Ainslie, which was a well-known resort of the wilder spirits and nobles of the Court. It was a party of Scotland's noblest blood and oldest names, and amongst the many guests known to be present were the Earls of Morton, Argyll, Huntly, Cassillis, Eglinton, Erroll, Sutherland, Glencairn, Rothes, and Caithness, with the Lords Herries, Hume, Boyd, Seton, Sinclair, Sempill, Ogilvie, Ross-Halkett, and Invermeath. Three prominent absentees are to be noted: Lethington and the Earls of Atholl and Moray.

The supper was a great success; the wine rich and plentiful for those times, and Bothwell the hero of the feast. Congratulations rained upon him as the evening advanced, and when, at a late hour, Bothwell himself suggested the usual Scottish practice of a "band of friendship" he was received with general acclamation.

Someone spoke openly of Bothwell's position in the Queen's favour, and my Lord, never slow to press home an advantage in love and war, at once rose and quite coolly announced his intention to marry the Queen! This bold and insolent proposal fell like a cold douche on many of the nobles present, for Bothwell,

of course, was known to be a married man, and the Earl of Huntly, the brother of his wife, was present. In the momentary confusion the Earl of Eglinton, not liking the trend of events of this convivial evening, quietly stole away, but he was, apparently, the only guest who escaped the signing of the "band."

Bothwell, in an impassioned speech, swore that he had the Queen's consent and had been empowered to propose the matter to the nobility. It may be true that he *had* obtained some sort of reason for his statement, and that she had probably acquiesced in a "band of friendship," for she, poor proud woman, had no one else to guide her, and found her turbulent nobles far too robust for her unaided hand to control. Once more she sadly needed the "strong arm." Bothwell had previously, to Morton, sworn he had "the Queen's consent" (to murder the King), and she had then, by her written repudiation to Morton, proved him the reckless liar we know he was; probably his present statement was but a repetition of the former occasion.

Someone questioned the possibility of his purposed marriage, but divorce was merely a matter of days to exalted persons in those times, and Bothwell airily replied that all this could be arranged on the ground of consanguinity, and the absence of the Papal Dispensation for his own marriage to Lady Jean Gordon; there had been a Dispensation, but it had not arrived until after the marriage ceremony, and therefore the marriage was void. Huntly mentioned that his sister had consented to bring the action for divorce on his (her brother's) solicitation, and in the interests of the weal of Scotland!

Bothwell's own friends in the company were now in full agreement; any others that might be lukewarm, had but to look out of the window of the banqueting room to see Bothwell's usual strong guard around the house and filling the street; one or other hoping, perhaps, to emulate Eglinton's early escape, left the room for a moment, only to find armed men in the passages and on the stairs. My Lord had taken no chances with his guests!

A "band" was therefore drawn up of which an authenticated contemporary copy exists in the State Paper Office. It is dated 19th April 1567, and bears an endorsement in Ambassador Randolph's hand that "upon this was grounded thaccusation of therle Morton" and this band certainly caused Morton's trial and execution.

The purport of the band was that "this noble and mighty Lord," the Earl of Bothwell, was, and had been judicially adjudged, innocent in the slaughter of the Lord Darnley, King-Consort of Scotland, that the same "noble and mighty Lord" was a suitable husband for the Queen of Scots, whose continuation in the solitary state of her widowhood was injurious to the interests of the commonweal; it went on to bind all the signatories thereto in the usual phrases "to be friends to his friends, and enemies to his enemies," to protect the Earl of Bothwell to the utmost, and to use all endeavour to advance his marriage with the Queen; and it concluded that if any of the signatories failed they should lose every shred of honour and "be accounted unworthy and faithless traitors."

All present signed the band, Huntly one of the

first; doubtless some were reluctant and signed from fear, or under other duress, but the fact remains that all of them signed, and Bothwell had a clear mandate to obtain his divorce as a preliminary to his crowning elevation as King-Consort.

James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell

From a miniature in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery

[*Face p.* 200

CHAPTER XV

WHERE THE GREY TIDE BREAKS UPON THE ROCKS

It is quite safe to assert that by this time Elizabeth had established a "secret service" at the Scottish Court, through which every trivial incident that was likely to have the slightest influence upon the political situation in either of the Sister-Kingdoms, was made known to her immediately it occurred, and we have already seen in these pages how assiduous were her ambassadors and envoys, Randolph, Throckmorton, Bedford, Killigrew, and others, to report every move to Cecil as it occurred.

We can imagine therefore that the extraordinary events following Darnley's murder were faithfully retailed through one or other of her numerous spies, and that the dispatches from Scotland were awaited with avidity by the English Queen. Tytler says:[1]

"She knew and watched with intense interest every step taken by Mary; her far-reaching and sagacious eye had, it is probable, already detected the ruin of her beautiful and envied rival, in that career of passion upon which it was now too apparent to all, that she had entered."

It is not often that one has to disagree with this fair and careful historian, but in this instance, and in

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 246.

some that follow it, I venture to do so with regard to Mary's alleged "career of passion" and to assert that it had no more existence at this period than it had six months before, when Buchanan alleged that "by excessive indulgence in her passion Queen Mary nearly died." I have proved the utter impossibility of Buchanan's statement in reference to incidents in October 1566, and though Tytler can at once be absolved of any venomous intent in making a similar assertion as regards April 1567, I claim that it is based on just as little foundation as was Buchanan's more vindictive statement. There is not a tittle of reliable evidence of any "passion" at all on the part of Mary for Bothwell, either before or after Darnley's murder, at any rate until his forcible detention of her at Dunbar, and we shall see presently how much or how little "passion" there was in that incident.

Meantime let Tytler's statement be countered by one from another careful work; Chalmers writes,[1] on the personal statement of Sir James Melvil, that at Dunbar Bothwell:

"there boasted that he would marry the Queen, who would, or who would not; yea, whether she herself would or would not. * * * He was emboldened by the declaration of so many peers and prelates that they would defend his marriage" (*i.e.* the Ainslie band). "He now coerced the Queen till she agreed to marry him, and she afterwards complained, feelingly, that while she remained under his thraldom in the Castle of Dunbar not a sword was drawn for her relief, but after her marriage with him owing to these causes, a thousand swords

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 216.

were drawn to drive him from the country and to dethrone her."

Where is any appearance of "passion" in this authentic statement? Despair, and yielding to circumstances if you will, but "thraldom" is scarcely consistent with "passion."

But there is much stronger and later evidence attested to by some of the Queen's most bitter opponents, that she was the victim of a conspiracy, and not of her own passion; that in fact "the unhappy Queen had been drawn, by matchless artifice and force, into a snare from which she could not escape."[1]

On 21st July 1567, the Queen being then a prisoner in their hands and Bothwell a fugitive, so that there was no reason to lie for fear of any consequences, the Privy Council of Scotland, with Morton at its head, asserted "that after the Earl of Bothwell had arrested the Queen's person and carried her captive to Dunbar, *he constrained her, being in his bondage, to consent to marry him.*" Again in December 1567, in Bothwell's Act of Attainder, he is charged with the seizure of the Queen's person and "with coercing her into the marriage." Not a word of any charge against the Queen, or of her "passion" for Bothwell, on the part of these Lords who held her, a helpless captive, in their hands! Those charges were concocted long afterwards by Moray, but how gladly they would have been seized upon *at the time* by him and his faction, had they been able to produce the least shred of evidence in support of them, and how gladly also would they, afterwards

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 217.

when the charges were made, have expunged from the Privy Council records, the very Acts by which her innocence is thus clearly demonstrated!

Tytler was evidently drawn into his unhappy phrase by the later charges and the many veiled innuendos made against her by Kirkaldy of Grange when the Queen was safely immured at Lochleven, and it is most regrettable that his *History*, generally so fair to the Queen of Scots prior to her abduction by Bothwell, should have lent the weight of his authority to such baseless scandals against her after that cruel offence on the part of the one man in whom she reposed her trust.

The infamous conspiracy of Bothwell at Ainslie's tavern was duly reported to Cecil by Randolph, and a copy of the "band," upon which Morton's accusation was long afterwards founded, was forwarded to London. On the Monday following Bothwell's pleasant little supper-party, the Queen rode from Edinburgh to Stirling to see her young son, who was under the care of the Earl and Countess of Mar. The Earl had been dispossessed of his office as Governor of Edinburgh Castle in favour of the Earl of Bothwell, but he was Hereditary Governor of Stirling Castle, and the young Prince was to be seen there by the many who came to pay their respects to him. Stirling was far more healthily situated for so young a child, than the low-lying Palace of Holyrood-house in the closer air of the city, and the Countess of Mar had played foster-mother to the Prince ever since his birth.

There were not wanting some of Mary's detractors who had even gone the length of asserting that, owing

to her "passion" for Bothwell, Mary was quite as ready to murder her own son, as they alleged she had been to destroy his father, and George Buchanan even went so far as to aver that her journey to Stirling on this occasion was undertaken with that object in view.

There is no question that she was looked upon with suspicion by all Bothwell's enemies and un-friends, and the Earl of Mar was undoubtedly of that faction. Hence when the Queen arrived at Stirling, and announced her wish to see her son, her indignation can be imagined when Mar endeavoured to restrict her attendants whilst in the Royal apartments to no more than two of her ladies!

Mary stayed at Stirling until Thursday 24th April, and in the interval, whilst she was, for the first time, revelling in her maternal rôle, and in the company of her babe, without thought or care of State and her formal duties, her enemies, especially those implacable Reformers to whom her religion was anathema, were not neglectful of their opportunities.

Sir William Kirkaldy of Grange was one of the strongest supporters of the Reformed faith, and although an honest enough person according to his lights, he had a fanatical dislike of his Sovereign as a "Papist," and also looked with suspicion upon Bothwell's overweening audacity and meteor-like rise to power. It is probable that he did actually believe that such a man, whom he considered with certainty to have murdered Darnley, would have little or no hesitation in removing the son if he stood in the way of his ambition, and in this fear no doubt he was justified; but, though he asserted that Bothwell held

the Queen in his power against her will, he also proclaimed the story of her "passion" for her captor. It is also probable that he was aware of the "band" signed at Ainslie's tavern on the previous Saturday night, for several of those who had signed it were not only already repenting their action, but were forming themselves into an anti-Bothwell faction, pledged to take the first opportunity to call in any aid to prevent Bothwell's further aggrandisement, and to protect the Prince Royal of Scotland against the machinations of the self-avowed King-Consort-Elect, and the dangers by which, in their opinion, the Prince was threatened.

So Kirkaldy of Grange addressed a letter to the Earl of Bedford adversely commenting on the "infatuation of the Queen," asking for the assistance of Queen Elizabeth for himself and his friends to avenge the murder of their late Sovereign, enlarging on the danger of the Prince being made away with, and concluding with the words "whatever is unhonest reigns presently in our Court. God deliver us from their evil."[1]

On Thursday, 24th April, the Queen was to return to Holyrood, and on that day perhaps the most remarkable and prophetic letter in all the remarkable series of correspondence of the period which has been preserved, is recorded by Keith and must be repeated here. It is in the State Paper Office, undated and unsigned, but it was probably addressed to the English Secretary of State, and it reads:

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Kirkaldy of Grange to Cecil, 20th April 1567.

"This is to advertise you that the Earl of Bothwell's wife is going to part with her husband; and a great part of the lords have subscribed the marriage between our Queen and him. The Queen rode to Stirling this last Monday and returns this Thursday. I doubt not but you have heard how the Earl of Bothwell has gathered many of his friends, as some say to ride in Liddesdale, but I believe it is not, for he is minded to meet the Queen this day called Thursday and to take her by the way, and carry her to Dunbar. Judge you gif it will be with her will or no! but you will hear at more length on Friday or Saturday, if you will find it good that I continue in writing as occasion serves. I wald you reif (destroy) this after reading. This bearer knows nothing of this matter. There is no other thing presently to write of, but after all you will please receive my hearty commendations by him that is yours that took you by the hand. Midnight."

We can only guess at the recipient (Cecil through Drury), but we know that he did not "reif" this remarkable piece of espionage, which shows what a perfect "Secret Service" he had established; we cannot even guess at the writer, but he must have been someone very closely in Bothwell's confidence to have such a clear knowledge of his plans and intentions. But again I contend, in spite of the innuendo it contains, that whilst it is clear evidence against Bothwell, it is no evidence at all against the Queen.

On the fair spring morning when the Royal cavalcade set out from Stirling, Mary seemed pensive and sad in her manner, as had been frequently noted since the crime at Kirk o' Field. Her escort of some fifty lances from the Borders, was well ahead of the Queen's personal party, which consisted of the

Earl of Huntly, Lethington, and Sir James Melvil, the four riding abreast.

It is to be assumed that of these Huntly, at least, was aware of what was afoot, Lethington possibly not, as Bothwell hated and mistrusted him; Melvil was certainly ignorant.

The cavalcade was approaching Almond Bridge, some six miles from Edinburgh, where there is a sharp dip, with a turn in the road as it winds down to a little burn. Here, without any attempt to stay him on the part of her small escort, as would be natural, Bothwell suddenly appeared with his numerous retinue and joined the Queen.

Unfortunately we have no clear account of what took place at the meeting, or of when or where Mary realised that she was virtually a prisoner, or what conversations took place. The only account of any kind left by anyone present that helps us to understand the sequence of events, is that of Sir James Melvil,[1] who asserts that when he remonstrated against his being taken to Dunbar, and not allowed to leave the cavalcade when within three miles of Edinburgh, he was informed by a confidential servant of Bothwell's, Captain Blacater, that everything had been done by consent of the Queen. Here we see the old lying excuse revived, and always by Bothwell; he had told Morton that Darnley was to be murdered "by the consent of the Queen," but fortunately the evidence of Archibald Douglas clearly proved the falsity of that statement; and it is obvious, therefore, that the identical falsehood, twice subsequently repeated by the

[1] *Melvil's Memoirs*, p. 177.

author of the original lie, must be regarded as entirely unworthy of credence. The only other statements which it is necessary to mention, are a letter from Drury[1] where it is stated that the Queen with her attendants were surrounded and "with a show of violence, conducted to Dunbar," and the account in Chalmers who avers[2] that "she was carried forcibly to Dunbar Castle." I think it much more likely that she went quite unresisting and unsuspecting on advice from Bothwell, from Huntly whom we know to be in Bothwell's plot but who was also her faithful friend, and quite possibly from Lethington also, to avoid the unreason of the Edinburgh mob at the delay in punishing the murderers of Darnley.

This episode of the meeting between the Queen and Bothwell, has resulted in more divergence of opinion amongst her enemies, and her friends also, than any other of the occurrences which have been narrated, save only the true facts of Darnley's murder. Her enemies asserted at the time that she was in the plot and went willingly to Dunbar. The same enemies, in Bothwell's Act of Attainder, charged him with "forcible abduction," and this latter view has been the one generally held by her friends and vindicators. For the reasons I have given, I incline to the belief that she went willingly, on advice given, and so unwittingly provided her enemies with one of their deadliest weapons.

Quite likely Melvil's account is a perfectly veracious one, and quite likely Blacater did, on Bothwell's

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Drury to Cecil, 27th April 1567.

[2] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 216.

instructions, assert the Queen's agreement, to quieten Melvil when he protested at the change of venue; but it is more than likely that until the Queen wished to leave Dunbar and found herself restrained against her will, she would have no more aversion to visiting at Dunbar than she had just previously had at Seton, or any other of the numerous Castles of her nobles which she had visited since the birth of her son. Why it should be considered more improper for her to visit Bothwell at Dunbar attended by her Council and her ladies, than to visit Lord Seton with the same attendants passes comprehension. She had visited Dunbar on 2nd and 3rd April, as her wardrobe book shows, without any comment whatever from any of her detractors at any time, why therefore should she need to "invent" any story of abduction when she went there on 24th April? The restraint at Dunbar did not, I contend, commence until the *following day* at the earliest, when Melvil was released and dismissed, and the Queen found herself definitely a prisoner and realised the unreliability of the protection upon which she was now wholly dependent.

Be the actual facts of the meeting and the Queen's conveyance to Dunbar what they may, Bothwell saw his audacious plan in full tide of success, the bird in the net; guarded by a military force as strong as any in Scotland, and attended by a body of nobles and ladies of his own careful selection, who might, he thought, be relied upon to witness to his devotion and his loyalty to the Queen; for many of the rest, including Carwood, the Queen's tirewoman, were dismissed to their homes when outside Edinburgh.

On the morrow, with a reassuring message for the English Queen by the medium of a letter to Cecil from Sir James Melvil, the latter was released and bidden to return to Edinburgh. His release was a sad error on Bothwell's part, for he had conceived a hearty dislike and distrust of my Lord, and though loyal enough to the Queen, he promptly joined his brother, Sir Robert Melvil, who had thrown in his lot with Kirkaldy of Grange and the other opponents of Bothwell, now in declared rebellion as "protectors of the Prince" against her authority; to that party had soon to be added the Earls of Atholl (said to have received urgent secret advices from Lethington through Sir James Melvil, asking him to take the step against Bothwell's aggrandisement), Cassillis, Eglinton, Montrose, and many lesser lords who had signed the "band" at Ainslie's tavern.

But Melvil was to do Queen Mary a far greater dis-service than merely to join her enemies, when he informed his brother of affairs at Dunbar, for the latter wrote secretly to Cecil, as he thought "to excuse" the conduct of the Queen, and to beg the intercession of Elizabeth, stating that "easy help shall obtain the Queen's liberty, and in like manner have the murderer of the King, who is with God, punished." He stated that the banded lords were resolved never to consider their Sovereign at liberty so long as she remained in the company of "that traitor who had committed so detestable a murder, whatever she might protest, or say to the contrary."[1]

In his *Memoirs* Sir James Melvil wrote definitely

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Melvil to Cecil, 7th May 1567.

that Mary "was abducted by Bothwell, and violated by force at Dunbar," but Melvil was there only one single night, and on that night at least, there was no question of any "violation." What happened during the remaining ten days we shall never know.

It is true that on 26th April Kirkaldy of Grange addressed a letter to the Earl of Bedford in which he states[1] that "the Queen was minded to cause Bothwell ravish her in order that she may the sooner end the marriage which she promised before she caused Bothwell murder her husband," but it must not be forgotten that Grange was—always for religious reasons—a bitter opponent of the Queen, was one of the Lords to whom she afterwards surrendered at Carberry, and was utterly forsworn on that occasion. If I have succeeded in proving Mary's entire personal innocence of the murder of Darnley, then I contend that this letter of Kirkaldy of Grange stands self-condemned by the statement in it that "she caused Bothwell murder her husband."

I have said that his so-called "abduction" of the Queen of Scots was probably with her full free-will and consent, as has been alleged with such wealth of circumstantial evidence by her enemies, but from entirely different reasons from these advanced here.

The Lords of her Council who were with her, Huntly and Lethington, were consenters and participators in the "abduction." Sir James Melvil, the only "passive resister," was released the next morning, and there were as yet no "prisoners" at Dunbar.

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, a copy endorsed by Cecil's clerk.

But these facts consorted ill with the designs of the forsworn Lords who had agreed to further Bothwell's project of marriage with the Queen, and who now gathered round the cradle of the young Prince at Stirling, under the leadership of the Earl of Mar and Kirkaldy of Grange, where they were shortly joined by Sir Robert Melvil with his brother's news of the supposed happenings at Dunbar.

The next step on the part of the recanting Lords was to make the best of their story, and the Laird of Grange wrote again to the Earl of Bedford,[1] specially for the purpose of whitewashing their own proceedings and blackening those of Bothwell. Here are the salient phrases of that letter:

"At that time the most part of the nobility, for fear of their lives, did grant to sundry things both against their honours and consciences, who since have convened themselves at Stirling to make a band to defend each other in all things that shall concern the glory of God and commonweal of their Country. The heads that presently they agreed on is, firstly to seek the liberty of the Queen who is ravished and detained by the Earl of Bothwell, who was the ravisher, and hath the strengths, munitions and men of war at his commandment."

The next two "heads" of the band undertook to protect the Prince, and to pursue the murderers of the King—many of those who had a guilty knowledge of the "murder band" were parties to this new instrument, as well as to the "Ainslie's band"; which is to show how much value could be placed on such undertakings!

[1] Copy of letter, State Paper Office, Grange to Bedford.

Grange's precious letter then goes on:

"For the pursuit of these three heads they have promised to bestow their lives, lands and goods, and to that effect their lordships have desired me to write unto your lordship to the end that they may have your Sovereign's aid and support for suppressing the cruel murderer, Bothwell, who at the Queen's last being at Stirling suborned certain to have poisoned the Prince, for that barbarous tyrant is not content to have murdered the father, but he would also cut off the son."

Grange adds, amongst much verbiage, that the names of the Lords convened at Stirling are the Earls of Argyll, Morton, Atholl, and Mar.

Now here you have the first story of any "abduction" and "ravishing" as told originally by Sir James Melvil to his brother, repeated by Sir Robert Melvil to Kirkaldy of Grange, and now again by Grange to the Earl of Bedford, for Queen Elizabeth's consumption!

Let us examine their powerful "evidence," against which, it must be recollected, there are only two substantial witnesses other than the accused parties, namely Huntly and Lethington.

Kirkaldy of Grange, if bigoted, was as I have said, a comparatively honest man in dubious times, and we may take it that he believed the story of ravishing which he thus officially set on foot, but he had received it at third hand, and there was just about as much truth in it as in that other story, that Bothwell had "suborned certain" (Mary herself seems indicated, and we see Mar's suspicion in this) to poison the Prince during the Queen's visit to Stirling!

Of the four Lords mentioned in Grange's letter, two had been signatories to the "Ainslie band" and the Earl of Atholl certainly had full knowledge and acquiesced in the plot to murder the King. Mar alone was innocent of both projects, and his entire devotion, it may be readily conceded, was given to the Prince as the Protestant[1] hope, as against the Queen's Catholic prejudices; hence his anxiety for the Prince's safety, which had obviously never even been threatened. Mar was certainly guiltless, but it was a little invidious of the other three to refer to Bothwell as "a cruel murderer"!

Three of these Lords, then, knew that their lives and estates were forfeit if Bothwell prevailed, for the Queen could never forgive the story of her abduction and ravishing. This story is, in itself, a complete vindication of the earlier calumnies of the Queen's guilty intimacy with Bothwell at the Chequer House in Edinburgh, at Jedburgh, and at Holyrood before and after Darnley's death, and of her infatuation for Bothwell, so assiduously circulated by Buchanan, Moray, Morton (later) and her other detractors, for if she had been guilty of such intimacy how could she be "ravished by force" at Dunbar?

I make no plea for my Lord of Bothwell! He was quite capable of defending himself if defence were needed, or of dispensing with any defence when such was unavailable, and from this point onward he certainly merits no consideration; but his methods, his intentions, and his utter disregard of all obstacles,

[1] I use the word "Protestant" here and elsewhere in the modern sense. It was, of course, much later than 1567 before it came into general use.

or claims upon the dictates of decency, truth, and the honour of his Queen and Country, were not shared by Mary Stuart. The pity of it is that so young and trusting a woman, such malleable material for either good or evil, should have been as "potter's clay" in the hands, successively, of three such men as James Stuart, Henry Darnley, and James Hepburn.

Now let us return to the bleak fortalice of Dunbar and briefly touch upon what little is known of the ten days spent there by Queen Mary. On the morrow of her conveyance thither, as we have seen, the Queen's first action was to instruct Melvil to send an explanatory letter to the English Queen, stating reasons for the change of venue of her Court from Holyrood to Dunbar, and he was then dismissed.

The Queen was now left with three councillors, Bothwell, Huntly, and Lethington, and it soon became evident to Lethington's astute mind that not only was Bothwell taking steps for the immediate dissolution of his marriage, with a view to putting the pinnacle to his ambition by a marriage with the Queen at the first opportunity, but also that Huntly was in the plot. Lethington realised his own precarious position; he cordially hated Bothwell and feared his immense influence with the Queen, for he knew Bothwell mistrusted him. His one hope had been in the facts of Huntly's devotion to his Sovereign, and Bothwell's marriage to Huntly's sister, and he naturally expected the strongest opposition to any project involving marriage with the Queen, to come from the Earl of Huntly. We can therefore imagine his consternation when he realised the truth.

On the second day of the Queen's visit to Dunbar a passing Englishman, travelling from Berwick, wrote that he had seen Bothwell and Mary in close and earnest conversation, "walking together strongly guarded, the Queen beautiful, and Bothwell in gorgeous apparel." Quite a true description no doubt, for there were sentries on the terrace, and a strong force encamped around the Castle; but one fails to trace any cause for condemnation in this extract from an unknown Englishman's letter, or why specially it should have survived in history for three hundred and fifty years as some sort of alleged proof of collusion between them.

This is the one solitary glimpse we get of the Queen during her detention at Dunbar. Meanwhile the conspiracy of the Lords against her had grown with extraordinary rapidity, and is thus commented upon by Tytler:[1]

"We see clearly from the letters of Melvil and Kirkaldy that the formidable coalition against the Queen which our historians describe as arising after her marriage with Bothwell, was fully formed nearly a month before that event; that its ramifications were extensive and deep, that Sir Robert Melvil in whom the Scottish Queen reposed implicit confidence, had joined the confederacy in the hope of rescuing his royal mistress from what he represents as an unwilling servitude."

So far Tytler accurately describes the situation; no one was better qualified than Melvil to "represent it as an unwilling servitude," and we may fearlessly

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 249.

accept it as such, for he had his information from his brother—the one person who was present at Dunbar, and who was qualified to know the real facts at the time of his dismissal.

The remainder of the period of the Queen's stay at Dunbar is a blank, but we know that Bothwell pressed on his divorce from his Countess, the Lady Jean (Gordon), with the assistance of the Archbishop of St Andrews.

CHAPTER XVI

A WEDDING IN WEEDS

One of the most difficult problems to solve, at the time of the Queen's detention in Dunbar particularly, and at all times subsequent to Darnley's murder generally, is what underlying motive actuated the mind of William Maitland of Lethington. How far was he a loyal servant to the Queen, how and when was he suborned from his allegiance to become a mere puppet and tool of the Earl of Moray, and why did he throw off the mask and become an open traitor when the Queen married Bothwell?

Lethington was, of course, always a time-server, but he had at least served his Sovereign faithfully and well and had an overwhelming influence upon all her actions down to the time of her marriage to Darnley. His mind had always truckled to the stronger will of the Earl of Moray and together they had governed the policy of the country until Moray's rebellion in October 1565, when Lethington was suspected of being in sympathy with him, and for a time was out of favour.

He was privy to the slaying of Rizzio, and indeed had counselled it in a letter to Cecil a month prior to the event, and thus it is clear that he was a party to Moray's secret plans in using Darnley as a tool for

his own aggrandisement; but it is at least doubtful how far he was then prepared to go against his Queen and constant benefactress, to whom he owed literally everything, place and lands, wife and power, finally—at Dunbar, his very life itself.

He appeared to be entirely friendly to Bothwell after the latter's recall from France, and we know that he was one of the most active abettors of the murder of Darnley, and signed the murder band. He was one of the five at Craigmillar (the others being Moray, Huntly, Argyll, and Bothwell) who proposed to Mary to divorce Darnley or otherwise to rid herself of him, and on Mary's objection that nothing should be done to sully her honour or conscience he was the one to assure her that she should "see nothing but good and approved by Parliament." On the same occasion he invented his famous phrase that Moray would "look through his fingers" at whatever they did.

After the conference with Morton at Whittinghame he accompanied Archibald Douglas and Bothwell to Edinburgh to obtain some sort of warrant from the Queen that would satisfy Morton, and he was aware of her unqualified refusal to permit anything of the kind. We see and hear nothing of him in the actual deed, but he is in evidence immediately after it, was present with the Queen on her journey to Stirling to visit the Prince, her son, and was in her party with Huntly and Sir James Melvil when intercepted and conveyed to Dunbar by Bothwell; whether he was aware of Bothwell's intention is, as has been said, doubtful, but once at Dunbar, we have the evidence of

Sir James Melvil himself[1] that Lethington reprimanded him for advising the Queen not to marry Bothwell, and Melvil says that she chose to do so as the least way out of her difficulties.

There is of course the possibility that if Lethington was not in Bothwell's "abduction" plot, and was actually a prisoner, he reprimanded Melvil out of fear of Bothwell, and it certainly appears probable that only Bothwell himself and Huntly were aware of his intention to detain the party, until they had actually arrived at Dunbar, and that both Lethington and the Queen herself were ignorant of it. Lethington then would be in fear for his life, for he knew that Bothwell loathed him and he may well have appeared to "reprimand" Melvil as a result of such fear. Lethington himself reported to Cecil, through Drury, that he was "a prisoner under guard," and declared that the Queen had consented to marry Bothwell, that he had opposed the project and had only been rescued from his captor's rage and vengeance by the Queen herself who had threatened him that "if a hair of Lethington's head perished she would cause Bothwell to forfeit lands, goods, and life."[2] Such a threat is full confirmation of the view here expressed, that there was never any "passion" for Bothwell on Mary's part, or any collusion with him in the marriage, until circumstances forced her hand.

This digression has been necessary to try to understand Lethington's actions at Dunbar and afterwards, to endeavour to reconcile his previous loyal service to

[1] *Melvil's Memoirs*, pp. 78-80.
[2] *Mystery of Mary Stuart*, p. 181.

the Queen, save on the one suspicious occasion of Moray's first revolt, with the blackest of treason and disloyalty to her after Dunbar.

Andrew Lang[1] states that the Queen herself, Morton, and Randolph all declared that "under the pretext of a secret friendship he was Mary's most deadly foe," and gives that as his own considered opinion. Personally I incline to the less severe view, that whilst he was Moray's supporter at this time (we know that he opposed him later) and the Queen's loyal servant up to a point, he was *Bothwell's* "most deadly foe," and saw in the ambitions of that nobleman and in the now probable marriage, a grave danger to himself and the destruction of his own lifelong ambition to unite the crowns of England and Scotland in the person of Prince James.

Such a conclusion makes his actions perfectly reasonable after her detention by Bothwell, but can neither excuse nor condone his dastardly conduct to the Queen once Bothwell was disposed of at Carberry Hill.

He was the Lords' spokesman with Sir James Balfour in arranging for the surrender to them of Edinburgh Castle. He himself admitted, long afterwards, that at Carberry Hill he had promised the Queen more obedience than ever before if she would dismiss Bothwell, and he broke his word! He was the man who persuaded the Lords to offer her the gross indignity of a night's imprisonment, with only two soldiers as her companions, in the Provost's house at Edinburgh; he insisted on her imprisonment in a place

[1] *Mystery of Mary Stuart*, p. 182.

from which escape was impossible and he suggested Loch Leven; he advised the Lords to have her secretly strangled, and when he heard of her abortive attempt to escape (to be presently narrated) he mounted his horse to fly from her vengeance.

Randolph, the English ambassador, charged him and Morton in writing that:

"You yourselves wrote against her and were the chiefest causes of her apprehension and imprisonment, and demission of her crown. So that you two were her chiefest occasion of all the calamities, as she hath said, that she has fallen into. You Lord of Lethington, by your persuasion and counsel to apprehend her, to imprison her, yea to have taken presently the life from her."

It was Lethington again who told Throckmorton that the Lords had proof of her guilt (when he knew himself to be one of the most guilty) of her husband's murder, in the Casket letters, and he is more than suspected of having stolen these letters out of the custody of Morton and getting his wife to copy them.[1] Andrew Lang bluntly charges him with tampering with, if not actually forging them, and says "Whoever held the pen of the forger, Lethington must have directed the scheme,"[2] and it is a fair and sound conclusion to draw from the facts. Again we can only wonder why this change occurred in the character and conduct of an astute and apparently honest person, and again we can only admit that we can never find an answer to the riddle!

[1] *The Mystery of Mary Stuart*, p. 248.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 353, and see chapter xvii. for proofs of Lethington's guilt.

Let us try and unravel the threads of the tangled skein that followed the dismissal and return of Sir James Melvil from Dunbar to Edinburgh. The next authentic news we have of the occurrences is contained in a guarded letter from the Queen to the banded Lords at Stirling, in which she informed them:

"It is true that we have been at first evil and strangely handled, since we came here by the advice of such good Councillors as we had with us, but since, so well used that we have not cause for complaint, and are entirely a free agent in all matters."

Current with the receipt of this letter came news that the Consistorial Court granted to Jean, Lady Bothwell, her divorce on all the counts which she had pleaded; *i.e.* absence of Papal dispensation, consanguinity, and adultery; this was ratified by Archbishop Hamilton four days later, and the marriage formally dissolved, and held to be of "no effect."

This ended the imprisonment at Dunbar; but in the swift passage of events, in the hostility both to the Queen and Bothwell which had swept like a pestilence across the country when the news of the "abduction" and the false reports of her collusion with him in carrying it out became known, it seemed more like ten years that they had been away from Edinburgh, so great was the change in the minds of the populace.

Mary rode into the city on 3rd May between Bothwell and Huntly, followed by Lethington and the Master of Sempill with their wives in attendance, and with a troop of unarmed cavalry as escort; the object of

the absence of their arms being to show that Bothwell needed no force, and had no treasonable intent. At the foot of the Castle Wynd he dismounted, removed his hat, and taking her palfrey's bridle led her into the Castle with all the honour due to the Queen of Scots, as the artillery belched forth clouds of saltpetre in a Royal Salute.

In the ensuing few days, Mary endeavoured to re-establish her court at Holyrood, but in the absence of all her principal Lords it was shorn of much of its splendour; the Earl of Huntly, Lords Herries, Livingstone, Seton, and one or two other and lesser court luminaries were steadfast in their loyalty, but the rest of Scotland's nobility held aloof at Stirling in a watchful hostility. Lethington and Sir James Melvil, the latter returned to his allegiance, and Sir James Balfour in command of the Castle, completed her most notable following.

The burghers of the city were sullen when she passed amongst them; and muttered remarks, of anything but a complimentary nature, were often overheard by her and by Bothwell as they walked the streets.

The churches and the Cathedral of St Giles resounded with charges against Bothwell. Craig, one of the ministers of the Cathedral, before the Privy Council and in his presence, charged him with the murder of the King, the rape of the Queen, adultery, the collusive nature of his divorce, and treason against the State. Bothwell swore he would have his life for it, but made no formal answer to the charges.

From Stirling the Earl of Argyll rode to Inveraray to

raise troops, the Earl of Atholl, in spite of Lethington's plea to stay his hand, northward to muster his clansmen, and the Earl of Morton to the south and east to make levies.

Grange again wrote to the Earl of Bedford :[1]

"The Queen is come to the Castle of Edinburgh, conveyed by the Earl of Bothwell, where she intended to remain until she had levied some forces of footmen, and two hundred horsemen. The money that she hath presently to do this, which is five thousand crowns, come from the font that your Lordship brought unto the baptism."

Grange also begged Bedford to hasten Moray to return from Normandy and for the assistance of the Queen of England. In this last request, however, he overlooked Elizabeth's autocratic idea of the unassailable prerogatives of monarchs, which Randolph has placed on record in a letter to the Earl of Leicester, a letter so illuminative of the English Queen's attitude that its reproduction may be excused :

"These news (meaning Mary's marriage) it pleased her Majesty to tell me this day, May 10th, walking in her garden, with great misliking of that Queen's doing, that now she does so much detest that she is shamed of her. Notwithstanding her Majesty doth not like that her subjects should by any force withstand that which they see her bent unto and yet doth she greatly fear, lest that Bothwell having the upper hand he will rein again with the French, and either make away with the Prince or send him into France ; which deliberation her Majesty would gladly have stayed, but it is very uncertain how it may be brought to pass.

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Bedford to Cecil, 11th May 1567, with copy of letter Grange to Bedford, 8th May 1567.

"Her Majesty also told me that she had seen a writing sent from Grange to my Lord of Bedford, despitefully written against that Queen, in such vile terms as she could not abide the hearing of it, wherein he made her worse than any common woman. She would not that any subject what cause soever there be proceeding from the Prince, or whatsoever her life and behaviour is should discover that unto the world; and thereof so utterly misliking Grange's manner of writing and doing, that she condemns him for one of the worst in that realm, seeming somewhat to warn me of my familiarity with him and willing that I should admonish him of her misliking. In this manner it pleased her Majesty to retain me almost an hour."[1]

A pregnant hour—pregnant with the vituperation to which the unfortunate Queen of Scots was subjected by her own subjects, of the condemnation brought upon her by Bothwell, of the feelings of Elizabeth towards her. Is it any wonder that between them all, Grange, Knox, Craig, Bedford, Elizabeth of England, Darnley, Bothwell, and above all Moray, and Buchanan, Moray's creature, the character of Mary Stuart was rent to tatters and many of the lies they told of her have been accepted for truth through the centuries?

Misguided she was, but the worst crime ever proved against her was over-confidence in her folly, and she was now to give the most astounding proof of it.

The Queen summoned the High Court to a special session on 12th May. The High Chancellor, the judges, and many of the nobility attended on her command. Addressing them from the throne, she spoke clearly and briefly:

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 250. An unpublished letter.

"My Lords,—We are informed that certain doubts have been entertained by your Lordships, whether you should sit for the administration of the laws whilst your Sovereign was held in captivity at Dunbar by the Earl of Bothwell. Your Lordships may dismiss these scruples from your minds, for although we have been incensed by the conduct of that Lord in the seizure of our person, we have decided to forgive his offence against us in consequence of his Lordship's subsequent good conduct; and his care of his Sovereign in difficult times merits further recognition, and it is our present intention to promote him to still greater honour."

The Queen then read Bothwell's patent, creating him Duke of Orkney and Shetland, and calling him to the faldstool, with her own hands she placed the Duke's coronet on his brow.

Three days later, at four o'clock in the morning—an extraordinary hour—in the presence-chamber at Holyrood-house, that chamber still eloquent of the murder of Rizzio by Darnley and his minions, Mary was married to Bothwell by the Bishop of Orkney, assisted by Craig as Minister of Edinburgh, and, in the continued absence of John Knox, pastor of St Giles Cathedral.

It was a ceremony fitted to the circumstances, shorn of all pomp and gaiety; many of her chief nobles had refused to be present, and the Bishop, in his sermon, did not hesitate to stress Bothwell's previous reckless and evil life, and his repentance therefrom.

The Queen, but three months a widow, insisted on wearing her "dule weed," or widow's dress; scarcely the determination of a murderess, but not a happy choice for a wedding garment!

Holyrood-house: The Queen's Presence-chamber where Rizzio was murdered and where the Queen's marriage to Bothwell took place

Rizzio's body was left on the spot marked with a brass plate, seen by the open door

[*Face p.* 228

Bothwell, for his part, had insisted on a Protestant ceremony; he had small patience with the "Catholic Roman Faith," which Mary professed, and she had remonstrated with him for days before, but at the last suddenly gave way. It was her greatest and her final sacrifice for the man she married, and it may well be that she felt the marriage, in her mind her "only way out," was just as valid by the Protestant rite which she did not profess, as by any other in the circumstances!

Now all this appears reasonably consistent with the regular sequence of events as they would occur, if Bothwell had overcome her scruples and extracted from the Queen her consent to accept him as her husband. Whether she was detained by force or not at Dunbar, it seems clear that she had been "constrained," betrayed, intimidated, or persuaded into such a promise by Bothwell and Huntly, her only tried friends. She had no one else to rely on save Lethington, and he was "suspect" and soon to betray her utterly, so it would seem to her that there was no other course open against the enormous power forming or already formed against her.

Mistaken, foolish, reprehensible, as you will, for she must have known that Bothwell was guilty of Darnley's murder; where in this is there any proof of Mary's own guilt? If her "ravishment" had been effected at Dunbar, which is at least doubtful, it was her only possible course to avoid publishing the shameful fact to the world. If not, she must either impeach the chief of her only two powerful adherents as her husband's murderer, and surrender herself and

her throne into the hands of implacable enemies or—marry him. She chose the greater of these two evils, as events were to prove.

A May wedding! A bride in mourning! The groom a whitewashed regicide, and an adjudged adulterer, with a life-long character for every excess and iniquity! His only claims to the indulgence of his Sovereign and the love of a beautiful woman, were a steadfast and unswerving loyalty, and a reckless bravery in defending her, that called to similar attributes in her generous nature.

The portents of such a union were indeed unlucky!

From the very wedding night Mary was unhappy. She rode abroad with the Duke, and assumed a merry mood in public, whilst he paid her the greatest deference and respect, even refusing, in spite of persuasion or entreaty, to wear his bonnet in her presence.

But we know, on unimpeachable authority, that in private quarrels between the wedded pair were frequent, and only two days after the marriage Sir James Melvil and the French Ambassador, Du Croc, heard Bothwell upbraiding her in terms at once so bitter and so disdainful, that Mary broke into paroxysms of sobbing and called for a knife to end her misery! A sad enough awakening from her brief dream of security, truly, and a bitter enough punishment for her folly in assenting to the marriage, one would have thought, even to satisfy her enemies!

Her friends were never Bothwell's friends, and the ten days at Dunbar had made it quite clear to them that, with her marriage, Mary had put an end to their

usefulness to her, and to their desire to serve her. Honest Sempill and his wife, her "Mary Livingstone" of so many years, were the first to leave, without excuse or deception. Mistress Sempill was in expectation of her second child, and frankly hated Bothwell as a husband for her Queen and friend. So once the marriage was an accomplished fact, she simply terminated her attendance at Court, and in so doing ended her girlhood's companionship—for she never saw the Queen again.

Mary Beaton had married Ogilvy of Boyne a year earlier, prior to the birth of the Prince Royal, and had passed entirely out of the Queen's orbit.

Mary Fleming, married to her astute Laird of Lethington, was the next to go. Lethington had never recovered his equanimity after Bothwell had threatened him at Dunbar, and rather than remain at Court, he put his old project of "escape" into execution, in the early days of June. He stole away with his wife at night, and joined the Lords at Stirling. So recently as within a month, he undoubtedly owed his life, as he had previously owed his lands and prominence in the Councils of the Kingdom, to the Queen, and yet he joined her enemies! Many writers have defended him, and have expressed some doubt as to his real intentions and reasons, but a careful analysis of his subsequent conduct appears to reveal him here as a traitor, and it is impossible to excuse this defection in one upon whom, above all others, the Queen should have been able to rely.

Followed the Earl of Huntly, who requested permission to go to the north. In granting it, Mary

upbraided him that he meant to turn traitor like his father; this was unjust, for Huntly, whatever his faults, had always been her true friend, and his journey to the north was almost certainly for the purpose of raising a force to resist the clash with her insurgent nobles that he foresaw to be inevitable. So long as Mary lacked a close protector, that is from Rizzio's death to her marriage with Bothwell, Huntly had never left her side; but once married to Bothwell, the character of that audacious man brooked no other adviser, and Huntly felt that he could be of more service to her as a soldier than as a councillor, and acted accordingly.

Bothwell was rushing headlong to his doom and carrying the Queen with him. Moray, his bitterest and most powerful enemy, was returning to Scotland on the petition of the nobles, and their position at Edinburgh became seriously menaced. Even the very mercenaries in Bothwell's pay were under suspicion, and not to be depended upon to resist attack.

CHAPTER XVII

THE UNFOUGHT "BATTLE" OF CARBERRY HILL

It was a clear, fine morning early in June 1567 that the Queen and the Duke her husband suddenly left Edinburgh, and journeyed to Borthwick Castle, pending consideration of what steps they should take in the danger now threatening them. Kirkaldy of Grange, however, well served by his spies, at once began a forced march on the same night. He reached Borthwick in the early morning hours, and surrounded the Castle with nearly a thousand men thinking to make Bothwell prisoner, but he had counted without the ready wit and resource of that old campaigner who had often been in similar tight places. He slipped out of a postern gate, mounted a fleet horse and, almost unattended, reached Haddington and thence Dunbar.

The Queen also received timely warning, and dressing herself in a groom's apparel, booted, spurred, and mounted *à la* cavalier on one horse, and leading another, she passed in full view of the approaching army without attracting attention.

Finding their quarry escaped, the Lords, amongst whom were Morton, Mar, and Lindsay, as well as Grange, with their treason now declared and perhaps fearful of the consequences if Bothwell were able to

bring any considerable force against them, retired to Edinburgh; there they issued a formal proclamation that they had risen in arms to avenge the death of the King, and the forcible abduction of their Sovereign the Queen, by the Duke of Orkney. The impudence of such a pronouncement in the face of the Queen's statement to Parliament on her marriage, and the fact that most of the King's murderers were in the ranks of the insurgent Lords, is apparent.

To his shame Lethington now openly threw in his lot with the Lords; if indeed his moves were not undertaken in the Queen's own interest, but this does not appear supported by later events. The Earl of Atholl, always taking Lethington as his model and example, also joined them, and they adopted as their battle-flag a banner on which appeared a horrible device of Darnley's body lying under a tree, as it had been found, with the baby Prince kneeling beside it and praying for judgment on the murderers. Beneath the device was the motto "Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord." These measures brought many adherents to the rebels, and amongst them one of Bothwell's most trusted supporters, Sir James Balfour, who held Edinburgh Castle for the Queen. He now joined her enemies and surrendered his charge after three hours' pressure from Lethington; a deed of black treachery on both sides.

If we remember that this traitor Balfour was not only the author of the infamous "band" for the murder of Darnley, but actually held that instrument in his custody, we can see how far the federated Lords were really actuated by a desire to avenge the

murder, and how far their treason was due to a detestation and jealousy of Bothwell's influence, and to fear for their own heads.

The Queen meantime was not idle; she issued a counter-proclamation to the citizens of Edinburgh, bidding them arm in her defence against the insurgent Lords, but the latter were now too powerful for them to adopt such a measure, even if they had been willing. She sent a messenger to Sir James Balfour to hearten him in his defence of the Castle, but, as we have seen, he had betrayed his trust, and the Queen's messenger was intercepted.

With Bothwell at Dunbar for the third time, that stronghold which had twice before received her in an extremity, the Queen sent into the Borders a call to arms, which was responded to by some two thousand men, and with a further five hundred or thereabouts which formed the garrison at Dunbar, this was all the force at the command of the Queen of Scots, when she rode out with Bothwell to meet her insurgent nobles on the 15th June—a short month after her marriage.

Nor was her attire any more fitted to her high station than was her "army"! We know that she had hurriedly escaped from Borthwick Castle in man's clothes, and it is evident that Dunbar could not furnish her with proper attire, for we read that at Carberry Hill, the so-called battle that seemed imminent but was never to be fought, she appeared "in the ordinary costume of a burgher's wife, a short red petticoat, a velvet hat and muffler, and sleeves tied with points." This appears somewhat inadequate clothing, even for

a burgher's wife on a June morning, but it is all that history tells us about her attire!

The only noblemen in her train besides Bothwell were the Lords Seton, Yester, and Borthwick, but many of the Border Lairds, to their eternal honour, rallied to the Royal Standard.

The Queen caused a proclamation to be read to the army, denouncing the federated Lords as traitors, who for their private ends had determined to overturn the Government. They pretended, she said, to prosecute the Duke her husband for the King's murder, after Parliament had already acquitted him of the crime; they declared their resolution to rescue her from captivity, but she was no captive, as they, who had themselves recommended her marriage with the Duke, well knew; they had taken arms to defend the Prince her son, but he was in their own hands. How then could they think him in danger?

Surely never was there a clearer or more convincing statement of facts!

The Queen's little army now moved to Carberry Hill, an eminence which had been a prominent position of the English army prior to the battle of Pinkie; and Bothwell, quick to see the best dispositions for a fight, made use of the old intrenchments, and there awaited the attack.

The adversaries were soon in sight of one another, the rebels having marched from Edinburgh by way of Musselburgh, and Monsieur Du Croc, the French Ambassador, rode down from Carberry in a last effort to avoid bloodshed and to effect some arrangement. He brought with him the Queen's offer to pardon

any his past offences, on condition that he returned at once to his allegiance.

The answer to this pacific message, as such answer was returned by the Earl of Morton, should be specially noted in view of the imminent sequel. It clearly proves how utterly unworthy of her trust were the Queen's principal nobles arrayed against her!

"We are in arms," said Morton, "not against our Queen, but the Duke of Orkney, the murderer of her husband. Let him be delivered up, or let Her Majesty remove him from her company, and we shall yield her obedience."[1]

At this moment it was evident that defections amongst the Royal army were taking place, and some deserters were already surrendering to the insurgent army. Bothwell saw that if the situation was to be saved, he alone could do it, and with a gesture fully worthy of his reckless past, he dashed down from the hill attended only by a single herald, whom he despatched with a "cartel of defiance," offering to meet in single combat any of his peers in the rebel company who dared to charge him with the murder of the late King.

The Laird of Tullibardine took up the challenge, but Bothwell, as was his right under the terms of it, refused the combat on the ground that Tullibardine was not his equal, and addressed another challenge personally to the Earl of Morton. Morton took up the gage and agreed to a combat to the death, to take

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Scrope to Cecil, Carlisle, 17th June 1567, and Keith, p. 407. Also MS. letter, State Paper Office, Drury to Cecil, Berwick, 18th June 1567.

place on the instant, between the lines, the combatants to be dismounted, and to fight with two-handed swords.

The proposed fight, however, was now delayed from the rebel side, Lord Lindsay of the Byres claiming that he should be Bothwell's opponent in the quarrel as the nearest relative of the murdered King. Morton gave way to this plea, and presented Lindsay with his own sword. Lindsay's page came forward, and armed him for the fight in full view of the assembled hosts, after which Lindsay, who was always a deeply religious man, knelt down and prayed audibly for victory and for the punishment of the guilty.

At this moment, however, one of the Queen's officers arrived at the gallop, and brought her commands to the Duke of Orkney, definitely forbidding him to engage in any personal combat, and ordering him to return to her side immediately. He had no alternative but to obey.

During this prolonged delay the disaffection in the Royalist ranks had so greatly increased that, unless action were immediately joined, there would be no Royal army left to fight.

The Queen and the Duke rode through the ranks seeking to encourage their troops; she implored them to attack, and Orkney ordered the advance to be sounded. It was in vain, and when it was seen that Kirkaldy of Grange was in motion with a considerable body to encircle the hill, and take the Royal army in the rear, the mercenaries became panic-stricken and fled, leaving the Queen and Bothwell with scarcely more than their old bodyguard of two hundred hackbutters, and some sixty gentlemen of their following.

The situation was desperate; Bothwell's fate was sealed if he were taken captive, so the Queen played her last card. Ormistoun, one of the Border Lairds in her train, was sent to Morton to demand a parley, and this was granted.

Once more I stress the evidence of the facts, as they come down to us in history.[1]

Kirkaldy of Grange advanced in person to the Queen, assured her of the readiness of the Lords to obey her, "if that man who was guilty of the King's murder and now stood by her side, were dismissed."

Poor girl, what else could she reply, if she were to preserve the life of the man she had married! There was but one answer, and that she now gave. If the Lords promised her on their faith and honour to return to their allegiance, she would leave the Duke her husband, and put herself into their hands.

Grange returned to Morton and the other Lords present, and brought back their "*solemn assurance that on these conditions they were ready to receive her and obey her as their sovereign.*"[2]

An extraordinary and touching scene, even to the most callous onlookers, followed. Mary led her husband aside, and pleaded with him earnestly for a considerable time, out of earshot, and both dismounted. At first he appeared furious and to remonstrate with her angrily, once his gusty laugh was heard, and she sobbed and wrung her hands, whilst tears ran down her cheeks. He then appeared to waver and took her hand; finally, gathering her into his arms, he crushed

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 256.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

her to him in farewell. There are several meagre accounts of the scene, and most of them agree that, as he was leaving her, Bothwell denounced Morton, Lethington, and Sir James Balfour by name as directly guilty of Darnley's murder. Andrew Lang says he handed her a copy of the "murder band," and bade her "take good care of that paper."[1] Perhaps the most eloquent account of the actual farewell by an eye-witness was written by a "French soldier of fortune" now nameless, but accounted as "a man of sensibility," who thus described the scene:

"Wherefore she caused the Duke to depart with great pain and anguish, and with many long kisses they took farewell, and at last he asked her if she would keep the faith she had given him, and she answered that she would. Thereupon she gave him her hand, and he mounted his horse, and, with a small company, galloped off to Dunbar."

She never saw him again. For a time she stood apart, stunned by grief, with great tears slowly brimming to her eyes and coursing down her cheeks. For half-an-hour she stood thus, doubtless to give the Duke ample time to get away. No one attempted to stay him, and this fact clearly proves the guilt of the Confederate Lords and their utter duplicity against their Sovereign, for they had stated, not once but many times, that their sole object in taking up arms was to "rescue" the Queen, and to punish Bothwell as the murderer of the King. Yet they watched him ride away without the faintest effort to take and punish him!

If it is claimed that for the Lords to do this, would

[1] *The Mystery of Mary Stuart*, p. 187.

The Surrender of Mary of Scotland to the Confederate Lords at Carberry Hill

From a rare print, dated 1742, in the possession of Sir George Macpherson-Grant, Bart.

[*Face p.* 240

have been a breach of faith, why then were they not equally "nice" about their pledge to the Queen to obey her as their Sovereign, if she surrendered?

Full well they knew that their own guilt was as great as that of Bothwell, and Tytler puts their mental position very clearly:

"Morton, Huntly, Lethington and Argyll were aware that, if driven to his defence, he could bring them in as accomplices. They allowed him to escape, because he was infinitely more easily dealt with as a fugitive, than as a prisoner."[1]

So the murderer they had sworn to bring to justice was permitted to escape, first to the north, thence to his Dukedom of the Orkneys, and when pursued there by Grange, to Sweden, turning pirate by the way; there he was imprisoned by the King, slowly went insane from his long imprisonment, and finally died, a mad and forgotten captive in a foreign land.

Now let us see how these perjured nobles dealt with a weak woman—their Sovereign whom they had "rescued" and solemnly sworn to obey!

Still clad in her incongruous "red petticoat" and "sleeves tied with points," Mary moved at last, listless and despairing, and walked to where Grange stood awaiting her.

As in a dream she made her formal surrender:

"Laird of Grange, I surrender to you on the conditions you have specified in the name of the Lords."

He kissed her hand, assisted her to the saddle, and taking her horse's bridle he led her down the hill to

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 257.

the waiting barons, who "received her on their knees."[1] Morton was their spokesman, and welcomed her with words as false as any in history:

"Here, Madam, is the true place where your Grace should be; and here we are ready to defend and obey you as loyally as ever nobility of this realm did your progenitors."

Now here was a definite, unsolicited assurance, but the pledge was broken within the hour!

Mary was placed between Morton and Atholl for the long ride to the capital. She had been in the saddle since five o'clock in the morning and it was now well on into the hot June afternoon. She had had no food nor refreshment of any kind, was tired, dusty and dishevelled, and she must have presented a pitiable sight as their little party of three abreast, with Grange bringing up the rear, approached the main body of the soldiery, her subjects; but her terrible plight excited neither sympathy nor compassion. A murmur swept through the serried ranks, swelling into a roar of vile epithets in which "murderess" and "adulteress" were some of the mildest. "Burn the hure!" shouted a raucous voice, and the cry was taken up until all around her was a shouting multitude of ruffians eager for her blood. Thus Queen Mary first heard the cry that caused her months of terror, for burning was then the legal punishment for a husband's murder.

She shrank back terrified. Grange drew his sword, and riding amongst the nearest of the rabble, struck right and left with the flat of it and restored some semblance of order.

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 256.

The company moved off on the road to Edinburgh, and the Queen, with the full horror of her terrible position brought home to her, asked Morton to be allowed to communicate with the Hamiltons, a large party of whom, under Huntly, had advanced to her assistance, but had only got as far as Linlithgow when she surrendered. Her request was emphatically refused, and the Queen bitterly reproached her guards with their breach of honour, asking how they dared treat her as a prisoner.[1]

It was nearly eight o'clock at night when she reached the capital, to be received with ribald and obscene cries and jests by the fickle populace, who would as readily have shouted with acclaim had she entered their city with triumphant troops. No attempt was now made to restrain the unlicensed fury of the mob, and the dreadful cry of "Burn her, burn the hure!" was taken up on all sides.

She was not even permitted safe quarters at either Holyrood or the Castle, but was thrust for the night into a tiny room in the Provost's house. In spite of her reminders of their pledges, and the fact that she was their Sovereign, her captors refused her the comfort of any of her woman attendants and she had to share the room with two rough soldiers, drawn at random from the Lords' escort, who were placed on guard over her.

Distracted by the realisation of her cruel position, by her terror of the fearful fate with which she had been threatened on all sides, her bitter pain at her severance from the man—whatever his own feelings for

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 256.

her may have been—whom she considered her one reliable friend and for whom she had given up everything she possessed, by morning she was in a state bordering on frenzy.

She rushed to the window, only to see the same dreadful banner which the Lords had carried to Carberry Hill displayed where it would be the first thing her eyes encountered when daylight permitted her to see it. Some kindly souls amongst the brutal populace had nailed it up opposite her window during the night, and Mary looked out upon the picture of the nude and slaughtered body of her husband, with her little son calling down the vengeance of Heaven upon his murderers, and realised at last the horrible truth that her subjects believed her to be one of his slayers.

CHAPTER XVIII

A BROKEN OATH. TREASON AND DUPLICITY

THE morning following her surrender at Carberry Hill was probably the cruellest period of Queen Mary's Gethsemane, the bitterest hour of her incredibly bitter life.

In despair at her treatment by her forsworn nobles, and at the insults hurled at her by the mob, degraded by the circumstances of her brutal and indelicate imprisonment with only two rude soldiers to guard against her escape, the night had seemed interminable; and with the first break of day her eyes had been shocked by the sight of the horrible banner, devised and intended to accuse her of complicity in her husband's murder, flaunted before her.

In her frenzy and despair, she almost tore the wretched remains of the bedraggled garments that she still wore, presumably the "sleeves tied with points," from her body, and oblivious of her semi-nudity, unwashed, her hair dusty and dishevelled, she leaned from her window and implored the citizens to release her. Her brutal guards dragged her back, but she eluded them and again got to the window, as Lethington passed by. She begged him to come to her; he merely crushed his hat over his eyes, and did not even look up,[1] but murmurs from the

[1] Andrew Lang's *Mystery of Mary Stuart*, p. 188, quoted from Nau.

passers-by shamed him, and he retraced his steps and ascended to her guarded room. A party of soldiers, hastily summoned, stood outside the Provost's house with grounded halberds during the interview and kept the citizens on the move.

Mary, utterly distraught, complained bitterly of the severance from her husband. Lethington brutally retorted that he had gone back to his wife—which was not true. Lethington could not meet her eyes throughout the whole interview. She reminded him that she had saved his life, and told him of what she had gleaned yesterday from Bothwell, that he, Morton, and Sir James Balfour were guilty of Darnley's murder as much as the Duke, and that she had seen their names on the "band."

This was a tactical error, and probably accounts much for Lethington's subsequent dastardly conduct. He, more than anyone else, was responsible for her imprisonment, and it was he who suggested immuring her on Loch Leven, insisted on her immediate imprisonment there, and yet he more than anyone else pretended to act as her friend whilst she was imprisoned, doubtless in the fear of her revenge upon him should she ever escape.

There was now danger from the fickle mob, and in fear that the populace would insist on her release, the nobles suddenly removed her to Holyrood-house at eight o'clock in the evening—the last evening she was ever to spend in the Palace which contributed so much to the tragedy of her life.

After supper the Lords announced that it was imperative to make another change in her lodging, and the unfortunate Queen was hurriedly mounted

on horseback and carried to Leith under guard. There she was handed over to the tender mercies of two of the most savage and uncouth of the Lords' faction, the brutish Ruthven and the fierce bigot Lindsay, who had been appointed her custodians in a stronghold from which escape was deemed impossible, the Castle of Loch Leven. This place belonged to the Laird of the House of Douglas who had married Margaret Erskine, that daughter of Lord Erskine who was notorious as the mistress of the Queen's father, James V., and the mother of her bastard half-brother James, Earl of Moray. Could studied indignity go further? This woman claimed that she had been legally married to the late King, that her son Moray was the rightful King of Scotland, and that Queen Mary was his supplanter on the throne!

The Queen reached Loch Leven on 18th June 1567. It was a strong place, but small and over-crowded, and there was little or no privacy for her. Situated on an island in the middle of the lake, and with such vigilant and vindictive jailers as Ruthven and Lindsay, it is little wonder that she gave herself up for lost, as she stepped ashore from the little boat that had brought her from the mainland.

Was she to be murdered in this forbidding place, as it is said Lethington had advised?[1] Would an "accident" be staged, and her body found in the placid waters of the lake? Or would she be brought to trial for the murder of her husband, and without any prospect of proving her innocence, be sentenced to the dreaded punishment of "death by the fire"?

[1] *The Mystery of Mary Stuart*, p. 190.

Such a fate was by no means impossible, and a wretched couple had actually been executed in this cruel manner only a few months previously.

But the Queen's sufferings were not to be so brief! She was to endure and to suffer for nearly twenty long years more!

On 20th June, the Fates played her one of their unkindest tricks, for on that day the Lords, hard put to it to find some good excuse for their treatment of their Queen after their solemn assurances to her and their false homage at Carberry, found exactly what they needed ready to their hand. On the day following her transfer to Loch Leven they had news that some of the Duke of Orkney's personal servants were in Edinburgh, and an immediate search was made for them; with the result that one of them, George Dalgleish, was captured, and on being put to the "Question," he delivered a small silver-gilt box into the hands of one of Morton's retainers. This was probably the far-famed "Casket," about which and its contents so much controversy has raged for more than three hundred years.

Of the "Casket letters," the alleged contents of this precious receptacle of Bothwell's, I do not purpose to say much—so much has been said already—but briefly to touch upon the long researches of others who were better equipped to analyse them.

Certain it is that the casket contained a number of Queen Mary's own sonnets to Bothwell, and it may be that *some* of the letters that it contained are genuine, but even this is doubtful; the majority of the incriminating documents handed down are certainly

either forged or have been tampered with, and Andrew Lang in his *Mystery of Mary Stuart*, and other writers, have conclusively proved their unreliability as evidence. But let us briefly examine them from another viewpoint.

These letters were alleged to be in the casket when it came into the Lords' hands on 20th June 1567, and immediately they circulated rumours throughout all Europe, calculated to excuse their conduct to the Queen, on the ground that they had secured definite proof of her guilty knowledge of the murder of her husband. Secret and so-called "copies" of some of these letters were sent to Queen Elizabeth for her information, but the letters themselves were not produced until December 1568 — eighteen months later! Why this delay if the letters were genuine? Then, when they *were* forthcoming, it was found that they did not agree in many details with those which had been spoken of as having been found in the casket eighteen months previously, and more damning still, the produced "originals" did not agree with the alleged "copies" which had been sent to London. Elizabeth herself—Mary's executioner, for reasons of her own policy—clearly expressed her disbelief in the discovery of any incriminating letters, and Randolph, her ambassador, darkly hinted that Lethington had tampered with those actually found. That someone *did* tamper with them, and that that someone was probably Lethington, is evident in the light of his other conduct, and the only fair, honest, and *English* line to take, as regards these letters, is entirely to reject them as evidence.

The persons concerned with the casket after Bothwell's flight, George Dalgleish, William Powrie, Hay of Tallo, and Hepburn of Bowton, were put to the torture; matters incriminating the Queen were said to have been extracted from them on the rack, but they never gave sworn evidence, yet Bishop Ross in his "Defence" stated that "they acquitted the Queen."[1] They were executed six months later.

Andrew Lang[2] has given us a masterly summing up of all conflicting and contradictory accounts of the murder, and particularly of the examination of the various persons who actually confessed to complicity in the crime. It must not be forgotten that all these examinations took place when Mary was a captive in her enemies' hands. They were conducted before Morton (himself afterwards executed for the murder), Atholl, Lindsay, and Kirkaldy of Grange, Moray being present in some of the cases, and we may well imagine that every effort would be made to implicate the Queen; yet in no single instance was any such implication possible, or even alleged, except in very vague terms.

One of the four persons I have mentioned, Bowton, who was examined on 8th December 1567, definitely charged Morton, Lethington, and Sir James Balfour, but Lang states authoritatively[3] "Moray suppressed the evidence utterly." He also states that "Moray carried the incriminated Lethington with him, later, as one of Mary's accusers, while he enriched Sir James Balfour."

But the clearest piece of evidence is that these four

[1] *Life of Mary*, p. 274.
[2] *The Mystery of Mary Stuart*, pp. 135-145.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

prisoners *were convicted on their own depositions* as the actual murderers, yet these depositions contain nothing whatever to incriminate the Queen. The whole four and also Ormistoun and Hob Ormistoun were executed before Elizabeth's enquiry was held at Westminster, and *only that part of their evidence was put in* which suited Moray, who appeared as his sister's accuser at that trial, and he suppressed all evidence against his friend Morton. As to this again, Andrew Lang rightly says:[1]

"It is abundantly evident that the depositions of the murderers, put in by Mary's accusers, did not tell the whole truth."

One final important piece of evidence as to the "faked" nature of the charges against the Queen. Bothwell's "familiar," French Paris, was not captured in Denmark until October 1568, when he was given up as a prisoner into the hands of a Captain Clerk in the Danish Service, *who is proved to have been in correspondence with Moray.* He could have been sent to London in ample time to give evidence at the Westminster trial in December 1568, but he was not produced; on the contrary, he was kept in Denmark and did not arrive in Scotland until June 1569. He was apparently never brought to any formal trial but was "examined" (tortured) for two days and left "authentick depositions." No one can say by whom they were heard, but they were "attested" by George Buchanan. Surely sufficient to prove their falsity!

Queen Elizabeth, hearing of his arrival in Scotland, sent an urgent request that he should be "spared"

[1] *The Mystery of Mary Stuart*, p. 155.

until his evidence could be heard by her agents, but Moray had taken special care that it should be heard only when it could never be sifted, and "French Paris" was conveniently underground by the time Elizabeth's courier arrived.

Well may Lang aver[1] that "the witnesses were very well managed so as to produce just what was needed and no more," and again, "as touching Mary these confessions are of the very slightest value";[2] and we may well leave it at that, as an exact statement of the case.

To revert to the discovery of the casket, this receptacle was alleged to have been delivered into Morton's hands — a very suitable custodian — by Archibald Douglas who, himself a murderer, almost certainly forged some of the documents it contained, and of those who "examined" them, we find Lethington and Sir James Balfour, both signatories of the "murder band," and Bellenden, concerned with Rizzio's murder. Andrew Lang has cogently dealt with them:[3]

"The same men, several of them guilty, were spreading *privately* the rumour of Mary's wicked letters, and at the same hour were *publicly* absolving her in their summons to Bothwell as late as July 14th; they spoke to Throckmorton of Mary with respect and reverence, while alleging that 'for the Lord Bothwell she would leave her Kingdom and dignity, to live as a simple damsel with him.' Who can believe one word that such men spoke?"

Who indeed!

Chalmers also has proved that the first four letters

[1] *The Mystery of Mary Stuart*, p. 155.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 169. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 202, 203.

of Goodall's series were fabrications, and states "as the Queen could not have been at Glasgow when those letters are dated at that place, they must necessarily be forgeries."[1] He wrote this in 1818, and the letters he referred to have since been conclusively proved to be false! It seems needless further to labour the falsity of such "evidence."

In the early days of her imprisonment, Sir Robert Melvil had been dispatched to London, ostensibly by Mary with an appeal for Queen Elizabeth's intervention and assistance, but in reality, and without her knowledge, as an emissary of the Lords with a message disclosing a project for Elizabeth's approval, that Mary should abdicate in favour of the infant Prince.

The Queen of England agreed to the demission, provided it came from the Queen of Scots herself, of her own free-will and accord.[2]

About this time, so loud was the outcry for the punishment of Darnley's murderers, and so great the fear of those nobles who were implicated in the deed, it appeared probable that Mary's life would be sacrificed to the public clamour and for the protection of the guilty Lords. The "fiery death" seemed to loom constantly before her, and she was in perpetual dread of condemnation. The English envoy, Throckmorton, always a good friend to the Queen, was, however, now in Edinburgh, and though he found it impossible to secure an interview with the Royal prisoner, he was able to bring such strong pressure to bear on the Lords that, after violent and impassioned discussions, they decided

[1] *Life of Mary*, vol. i., p. 237.
[2] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 262.

to adopt less savage measures, and dispatched Lindsay and Sir Robert Melvil to the Queen with three documents for her signature, which, with singular impertinence, the Lords had framed in their Sovereign's own name.

The first was a formal demission of the Crown and Government of the Kingdom, to her son, the Prince Royal, who was to be crowned forthwith in her stead.

The second purported to declare her concern for his tender age, and therefore appointed "our dear brother the Earl of Moray Regent of this realm."

The third appointed the Duke of Châtelherault, the Earls of Argyll, Atholl, Glencairn, Lennox, Mar and Morton, Regents of the Kingdom until the return of the Earl of Moray from France, with remainder to that body of noblemen to continue in the office should Moray refuse it;[1]—from what we know of him a *very* remote contingency!

Melvil is stated first to have seen the Queen, and to have assured her that her refusal to sign these documents when they were brought to her would make her execution certain, and he disclosed the alleged fact that the Lords now held certain proofs of her guilt (in the "Casket letters"), and that such proofs were in her own handwrit. Melvil tempered his veiled threat with the statement that if she did sign the deeds, in captivity and under the fear of death, they would legally be of "no effect."

Mary asserted with passion and tears which were equally unavailing, that no such "proofs" as were alleged were in existence, and that she would rather

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 268.

renounce her life than her Crown. It is stated by Tytler[1] that she believed herself to be pregnant; and it has been asserted elsewhere, but without any apparent authority, that she gave birth to twin children whilst in captivity on Loch Leven. At this visit of Sir Robert Melvil's about 25th July she is stated to have refused to renounce Bothwell as her husband and so declare her expected child illegitimate. Little credence need however be placed in the story of any child of Bothwell's having been born. Had such been the case it would certainly have been made public at the time and there is no hint of it in authentic history.

Lindsay was admitted after Melvil, and his brutal demeanour and threats (which she had heard before when Rizzio was slain, and which she had subsequently pardoned) now had such a terrifying effect on the heart-broken prisoner, that when he placed the three documents before her, and thrust a quill into her hand, she signed them without even reading the contents.

Nor was this *force majeure* all that was necessary; it required the addition of the Privy Seal to make the documents effective, and when the keeper, Sinclair, would have demurred, the Lords had him attacked in his own house and forced him by threats of personal violence to affix the seal to the parchments.

The coronation of the Prince at Stirling was now hastened on, and the English Ambassador was specially invited to the ceremony, which was to be of exceptional magnificence. He bluntly refused to be present on the ground that the whole proceedings were in

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, p. 267.

contempt of the advice and remonstrances of the Queen his mistress, and were contrary to law.

The coronation, however, duly took place in the High Church at Stirling on 29th July 1567, the Earl of Mar carrying the infant Prince to the Throne. In the attendant procession the Earl of Atholl bore the Crown, the Earl of Morton the Sceptre, and the Earl of Glencairn the Sword of State. The abdication of the Queen was read, and the perjured Lords Ruthven and Lindsay attested upon oath that it was her own free act and will!

In the evening general rejoicing was proclaimed throughout the land, and with a refinement of cruelty the Laird of Loch Leven actually ordered bonfires to be lit on the island in front of the Queen's windows.

The Earl of Moray had been sent for by the Lords with an intimation of his appointment as Regent, and his answer was awaited with great interest by all Scotland, as also by the Courts of England and France.

It was worthy of the crafty mind, which always impelled him to "look through his fingers"—for he returned no answer at all! He professed hostility to the action of the Lords in imprisoning their Sovereign, and stated his intention to return to effect her deliverance!

He then received, or stated that he had received, information that the Lords had discovered conclusive proof of Mary's guilt, and that a letter of the Scottish Queen to Bothwell, in their possession, proved that she was privy to her husband's murder.

Consequently when he arrived in London on his

way to the Scottish capital, and had an interview with Queen Elizabeth, who expressed her intention to restore Mary to her throne and to punish the subjects who had dared to imprison her, Moray's rage and mortification were manifest; and when the English Queen voiced her displeasure with him in no measured terms, he left her presence with the relations between England and the Scottish government seriously threatened.

He reached Berwick on 8th August, and there lodged with the Earl of Bedford; two envoys from the Government met him there, and informed him of the position of affairs. They urged his acceptance of the Regency, but Moray, still pretending reluctance, and realising that his position would not only be insecure, but illegal, if his appointment had been obtained from the Queen by duress, declined a definite answer and continued his journey. He was escorted from the boundary by a large force of nobles and gentlemen of the Lords' faction, and entered Edinburgh in great state amidst scenes of acclamation and rejoicing by the citizens.

For two or three days he was engaged in an examination of all that had transpired in his four months' absence, and we may be sure that he was made aware of, if he did not actually examine, the contents of the fatal casket. Doubtless these had, by now, been suitably "cooked," and although we may absolve Moray from any personal hand in that wickedness, we may be sure that he was aware of the falsification, and may assume that, if he ever really had any scruples in accepting the kingly power, they were now removed.

He now startled the nobles by a demand to see and discuss matters with the Queen, before giving his final answer, and it is evident that many of them distrusted him, not without reason, for they demurred to the request; eventually, however, they saw no alternative, and the interview was arranged for 15th August. On that day, and in company with Morton, Atholl, and Lindsay, he journeyed to Loch Leven and was ferried across to her place of imprisonment.

The meeting must have been a most affecting one, for it was Mary's last hope of rescue and restoration. Here was her brother whom, on her return to Scotland, she had sent for out of a monastery where he was serving as a simple monk; or, as she later put it before the battle of Langside, here was the "spurious bastard whom she had promoted from religious monk to Lord and Earl," and on whom she had conferred two earldoms with their rich revenues. In spite of his former double treason and banishment, surely he would not fail her now!

How did he treat her? She received him with tears, and spirited complaints of the gross treatment she had received at the hands of nobles who had sworn on their knees at Carberry "to defend and obey you as loyally as ever the nobility of this realm did your progenitors."

For two hours before supper she pleaded with him, but found him reluctant, gloomy, and taciturn. At supper in a spirited outburst, which was another tactical error, she reminded him that once he had not been too proud to hold her napkin for her!

After supper they continued their private discourse, which seems to have resolved itself, on the side of

Moray, into a long tirade of her wickednesses. But let us describe what took place in my Lord of Moray's own words as given by Sir Nicholas Throckmorton:

"After supper, everyone being retired, they conferred together till one of the clock after midnight, and the said Earl plainly and without disguising discovered unto the Queen all his opinions of her misgovernment, and laid before her all such disorders as either might touch her conscience, her honour or surety. I do hear that he behaved himself rather like a ghostly father unto her, than like a counsellor. Sometimes the Queen wept bitterly, sometimes she acknowledged her inadvisedness, some things she did confess plainly, some things she did excuse, some she did extenuate. In conclusion the Earl of Moray left her that night in hope of nothing but God's mercy, willing her to seek that as her chief refuge."[1]

If this is the best account that the Earl of Moray could himself give of the comfort and advice which he had given to his Sovereign and sister, well might she pray for the mercy of God! Well, too, might Throckmorton report, as he had done four days prior to the interview, that "he saw that the mind of the Earl of Moray was mainly occupied with the Regency, and was already calculating with what show of decent reluctance he could allow it to be forced upon him."

A shrewd observer, Master Throckmorton, as the sequel will show.

When Moray left his sister she was in an agony of fear and utter despair. Her last hope had failed her, and all she could look to was "God's mercy" and a degrading and terrible death.

[1] Throckmorton's letter to the Queen of England, 20th August 1567.

But in the morning all was changed once more! She sent for Moray at an early hour, and "perceiving the impression he had made," my Lord was now quite cheery, and was prepared to "sacrifice his life for her!" If she would repent her former life and deplored her past sins he could hold out some hope that those in whose power she was would spare her life! But if she attempted to escape, or disturb the quiet government of her son (meaning, of course, of the Earl of Moray in the name of her son), she would certainly lose it! Besides "freedom was not good for her"![1]

This was undoubtedly the right card to play!

After a night of absolute terror the poor Queen was shown a "way out," a gleam of hope. She took her brother in her arms, kissed him, cajoled, begged and prayed of him to accept the Regency, and so save her, her son, and her kingdom from destruction. Poor distraught soul, she could not see my Lord, with his mirthless smile of triumph, looking at her "through his fingers." "No! No!" he said in effect, "impossible, unthinkable; if I am to save you, I shall be unpopular, and so cannot be fit for this great office!——"

A last tearful prayer from the Queen, this time of a more queenly nature! The service of his Sovereign and his country ought to outweigh his own selfish motives and reluctance! We can imagine with what self-sacrifice my Lord awoke to his obvious duty, and how, at long last, he consented—I am sure with greatest regret and reluctance, and solely in the interest of his Queen and country!

[1] Throckmorton's letter to the Queen of England, 20th August 1567.

He also, doubtless with equal reluctance, consented to take charge of her jewels and articles of value, as the only means of preserving them;—and he gave them to his wife for her personal adornment and use!

Moray now took his leave, the bearer of the poor Queen's blessing to the son she was never again to see. He had, as Tytler remarks, "effected his purpose with much address, and some little duplicity,"[1] and he gave his formal acceptance of the Regency to the Lords. He visited the Prince at Stirling, and no doubt paid quite suitable homage, and he was formally and solemnly proclaimed "Regent of Scotland" at the Mercat Cross of Edinburgh, after an oration in which he declared his total unfitness for so high an office, and so great a charge!

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 276.

CHAPTER XIX

A VERITABLE "LADY OF THE LAKE"

Is anything further needed to prove the utter villainy of Moray and the Confederated Lords, other than their dastardly breach of faith to their hapless Queen after her surrender at Carberry Hill? If so, the events which immediately followed the Earl of Moray's return to Scotland should surely be sufficient to convince the most sceptical. He had no excuse for going abroad, save his usual method of standing afar off to "look through his fingers."

The Queen had been committed to Loch Leven by Lethington, Morton, and Grange, "until justice upon Bothwell should be done"—justice on the man they had in their hands and at their mercy, and whom they had permitted to escape as a pretext for the Queen's surrender, which was in any case inevitable! So Bothwell was pursued, at safe distance, by Grange with a great show of desire to capture him, but without the slightest attempt to do so.

The young Prince-Royal, Charles James, was crowned King of Scots as James VI., on 29th July 1567, under an illegally enforced demission of the own by his mother. Moray reached Edinburgh on 11th August, visited his sister four days later, and, as we have seen, forced from her a request, nay a

The Great Seal of Mary of Scotland

From an impression in H.M. Register House, Lyon Office, Edinburgh.
Reproduced by kind permission of Lyon King of Arms

[*Face p.* 262

command, that he should accept the Regency for which, failing the throne itself, he had continuously plotted and planned for six years! Huntly, Darnley, Lennox, and lastly Bothwell, had been the tools he used to hew his way to his ambition; each had been broken in turn and cast aside. Now let us see what happened to the creatures who had pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for him.

Moray returned to Stirling on 16th August, reached Edinburgh again on the 19th, and was formally proclaimed Regent on the 22nd.

His first action was to erase the Queen's name and title from all seals and instruments of government; his next to bribe Sir James Balfour to deliver Edinburgh Castle into his hands. Lethington arranged the surrender, Grange following Balfour as Governor, and so two of Moray's creatures were provided for, as both received heavy payment in money and preferment.

Next Dunbar Castle was surrendered by the Queen's Governor, Whitlaw, to the Regent of Scotland on the perfectly reasonable terms that the Governor should be held blameless by the Regent. No sooner, however, was the Castle surrendered, than the terms were violated, Whitlaw proclaimed a rebel, and his goods and lands forfeited *and given to the Earl of Morton;* but this reward was by no means sufficient for Moray's principal abettor in all his plots and treason. Huntly was still Chancellor of Scotland, and still the Queen's friend; Morton had been deprived of the office for his complicity in the plot to murder Rizzio, when his life was also forfeit; the Queen had pardoned him and restored his titles but not, of course, the Chancellorship.

To that high office he was now restored by the Regent Moray, who also conferred upon him the post of Great Admiral of Scotland, vacated by Bothwell, and he was also made High Sheriff of the Shires of Edinburgh and Haddington, with the large emoluments attaching to all these appointments. The one person of high rank conclusively proved to be guilty of Darnley's murder, and to be tried and executed for that crime (in 1581), was presented to all these great offices, and enjoyed them for fourteen years!

Thus Moray did not fail to reward those upon whose shoulders he had climbed to success, with as much avidity as he had destroyed those others of the Queen's adherents, friends, or servants, when they had served his purpose!

In her prison on Loch Leven's Isle, after the crowning of the infant Prince, the monotony of Mary's imprisonment had no break worthy of record for some time. Autumn dragged on into winter, the prison-weary captive seeing practically no one from the outer world.

Of her jailer, William Douglas, Laird of Loch Leven, we know little, save that he was a severe, rather brutish man, who had joined the Lords' faction, and who was a son of Margaret Erskine, the ex-mistress of James V., by her marriage to Sir Robert Douglas of Loch Leven; she was still acting as Châtelaine of the Castle. William Douglas was therefore doubly fitted to be the Queen's jailer, for apart from being banded with the Lords against her, he was a half-brother of the Regent Moray, and undoubtedly strong in his support. He appears to have had at least two

younger brothers, Robert and George, and a daughter and niece living at Loch Leven Castle at the time of Queen Mary's imprisonment; of his wife there is no record, and it is probable that she was dead. In addition there was a page-boy or "chamber-child" in the household, of the same name but apparently no relation, unless an illegitimate one, to the Laird. He was known as "Little Willie Douglas," and was to play a prominent part in Queen Mary's story.

Such were the principal inhabitants of the Castle at the time Moray was appointed Regent of Scotland. We have seen that his mother, Lady Douglas, had asserted that she had been married to King James, and that Moray was rightfully King of Scots, but had been supplanted by Mary. We can well imagine, then, that the Lords, in sending the Queen into ward at Loch Leven, considered they had her fast held, and that escape was impossible.

They reckoned without understanding the wonderful "Stuart charm" and fascination, of which Mary was the most pronounced exemplification, and we shall see how she exercised it on the most unpromising material.

Margaret Lady Douglas was at that time about sixty years of age, a fine, handsome, rather austere woman at this period of her life, though as a girl at Court and as the King's favourite, she had been of a gay and jovial disposition, and renowned for her great beauty.

It was to this Lady of Loch Leven that Mary turned in her sore need for comfort and womanly sympathy after her abdication. With her were usually

the daughter and niece of the Laird, both accomplished girls of the period, who joined the Queen at her tambour-frame, at her embroidery, in playing on the virginals and in singing ballads and folk-songs.

The two girls shared the Queen's bed-chamber and, in fact, acted as her Ladies-in-waiting, much as her Maries had done in happier years, and there is little doubt that, to some extent, she was on very confidential terms with them both; the three younger women would read in turns from such of the old romances and old poems that the meagre furnishings of the Castle provided. From the very first the two girls became the Queen's ardent slaves and adorers, and there was no single wish of hers that they were not prepared to grant.

The Laird of Loch Leven, the elder son of Lady Margaret Douglas, was just the typical "bonnet-laird" of his times, a hard rider, a rough soldier, quite likely a good sportsman, boorish, a little uncouth; he would breakfast on beef and strong ale, seldom went to his bed quite sober, and, when the mood was on him, would drink until he slept, and sleep where he sat—or fell. Not unkindly towards the captive Queen, he deemed her so safe under his charge that he permitted her considerable liberty within the confines of his little isle. She might walk and talk with his brothers, daughter and niece as she pleased, and, so long as one or other were with her, might take one of the three boats and go fishing on the loch for the trout with which it abounded; and she became so adept at the local method of "harling" that the Laird would occasionally

invite her—in tones which seem to have savoured more of command than invitation—to accompany him when the sport enticed him, and invariably found her far more proficient than himself.

Of his brothers, Robert was largely cast in Loch Leven's mould, and in addition he was a stern, unbending Calvinist, to whom the Papist Queen was "the scarlet woman," and from the first to the last "he had no commerce with her," never spoke to her unless addressed, and then as little as possible. Her beauty, her sadness, her cajoleries, were so much froth and play-acting to his sober mind, and neither he nor his elder brother ever came under the witchery of her fascination in any degree. Robert, therefore, may be dismissed altogether from our picture.

The second brother, George, was a man of very different calibre; a youth of some eighteen summers at the time of Queen Mary's imprisonment, he had an ardent and poetic nature, to which her sorrows and her wrongs made an immediate and direct appeal, and it would seem that he at once became, in spite of the differences of age and station, a romantic adorer of the Queen.

The page-boy, "Little Willie Douglas," was only fourteen years of age at this time, but he had the heart of a lion and more than his years' share of common-sense.

Of this household there were many serving men and maids, and some few rough soldiers who owned Loch Leven as their chieftain, and now acted, when needs required, as guards to the Queen and to salute the "great folk," Moray, Lethington, Ruthven, Lindsay

and the like, when they had business with the Queen, or with Loch Leven himself.

After the Regent's visit in August, Ruthven and Lindsay had withdrawn and gone about their business, and the island settled down to the prospect of hard winter weather, and isolation from the world of men.

Mary we know sent for "crimson silk and silver thread," and with the maidens' help worked a beautiful altar cloth, which is still in existence, faded and threadbare, but eloquent of those hard winter nights, which are easy to imagine, when the ice was a foot thick on the loch, and guards were doubled in case the Royal prisoner should attempt to cross to the mainland. Eloquent of the fir-log fires, when the wind whistled around the keep, and when, probably very occasionally, the long-drawn-out howl of a wolf, or more frequently the bark of a fox, would be carried over from the mainland on the winter wind.

In the late autumn, rumour reached the Lords that, friendless as she otherwise seemed to be, the Queen had won the favour of all the women of the little prison household,[1] and was "waxing fat, and making much show of mirth." Even dour old Lady Douglas seems to have melted to her charm, and saw again the love of her youth in the bonnie features of Scotland's ill-used Queen.

So when the tedious winter was past, and the advent of spring revived some gleams of hope in the Queen's breast, we can imagine her over her tambour frame, cajoling, pleading, beseeching the two girls to

[1] Noted in a letter in State Paper Office, Drury to Cecil, 30th September 1567.

assist her to escape; imagine her stroking the wrinkled hands of the stern old wardress, her father's early love, and begging her to give her a chance for freedom.

Above all, imagine her with George Douglas, by now not only head over heels in love with her, but half encouraged by his mother as a possible husband for the Queen of Scots! Nor did the Queen herself altogether discourage him, and even, it is said, suggested his name to his half-brother Moray on one of his few visits to Loch Leven, to his utter amazement, as a counter stroke when he had proposed an alliance with Morton, her greatest persecutor.

George Douglas soon had a plan cut and dried, arranging all the details with his two young nieces. At regular intervals it was the custom for Joan Hay, a "wash-woman" from Kinross, to cross to the island for the purpose of laundering the household linen and garments of the little fraternity of Loch Leven, and at length the young daughter of the Laird prevailed upon her to allow the Queen, dressed in the laundress's hooded mantle, to take her place in the boat returning in the dusk of the late afternoon.

All went well for a time, and the Queen was in the stern of the boat and actually halfway across the Loch, when a familiar remark from one of the boatmen led her, in an unguarded moment, to put up a hand to pull the hood closer round her face. The act was her undoing, for the delicacy and whiteness of her hand was quickly noted by the boatman, and a moment's closer examination of the supposed "wash-woman's" features, at once revealed the truth. The boat was

turned about, the Queen landed on the causeway of the Castle, and the Laird informed.

A furious scene of enquiry followed, the real laundress questioned and dismissed from any further service on the island, and the part in the plot taken by George Douglas soon discovered. The Laird banished him from the island entirely, with a severe admonishment of his probable fate if the plot had succeeded, and he had fallen into the hands of the Regent.

The Queen was again plunged into despair by this set-back in her hopes; but once he had departed to the mainland George Douglas did not remain idle in his chivalrous desire to serve his Queen. He opened communication with her adherents, Lord Seton and the Hamiltons, and he evidently carried on some sort of secret correspondence with the Royal captive, for through March and April it was observed that the cloud of despondency which had possessed her in the earlier days of the year was passing, and she was again winsome and merry in the company of the two young girls. "Little Willie Douglas" was now often in their company, in place of the banished George whom nobody saw, but who, on his part, had continued to perfect his plan.

The Queen obviously had some secret which pleased her, and, though certainly no one knew, except him or her who brought it, occasionally got or sent a missive. It was all very cleverly done!

Presently, on the night of the second of May, at dusk, Loch Leven was at his supper, the Queen on his right, his Lady Mother on his left, next them again the two girls, then, a space apart, his brother Robert

opposite the great salt. George's place was, of course, vacant. Below the salt the household officers and a few soldiers of the guard, for the gates were locked at night and the keys on the table in their usual place beside the Laird's trencher, the banner on the keep lowered, and the portcullis down. All seemed snug and secure. Little Willie served his Lord, and saw to it that his cup was filled full and often, the hall was merry with laughter and jests, and as the jests grew coarser, the ladies withdrew to their own place; doubtless to play on the virginals!

The Laird was merry, and frequently called Little Willie to fill his cup. Willie served him! Clumsy lad, once he dropped his napkin! The Laird was now far gone in his cups, and took no notice; the boy was lucky, for, had he noticed, Willie would have had a cuff to send him reeling. He glanced up once in fear of it, then took up the cloth—and with it the keys of the Castle, the great gate and the postern.

The hall was now in the usual uproar of song and jest, with doubtless now and then a sliding, falling form by chair or trestle; the Laird asleep with his head on the table.

Little Willie hurried from the hall, and whispered a word in waiting ears—one girl ready cloaked to tend the Queen, a hasty kiss pressed on a withered hand, another on a younger cheek, and then three hasting figures through hall and door and postern gate—no careless flight this time, doors behind them locked as they went—and so to the water's edge; not by the causeway now, but to where the smallest boat had been drawn up in the shadow of the bastion. The

other two boats rested on the stones of the Loch, each with a hole in her timbers large enough to admit a man's head.

Trembling with anxiety, the Queen took the boy's hand outstretched to help her over the gunwale—and found it cool and firm; there were no tremors there!

He took the oars and pulled away, paused once to drop the precious keys in the Loch, and again to take the Queen's scarf from her maid, that dainty scarf of white lawn with its broad crimson edge or fringe, and wave it in the deepening dusk.

The Queen, we read, was "breathless with delight,"[1] as well she might be. She then took one of the oars, Little Willie manfully pulling at the other, and in a few moments the water was crossed and she touched the mainland again for the first time in nearly eleven long months.

From a little planting on the marge of the lake a man had watched from sundown; it was George Douglas, her "bonnie Geordie," who now came forward and dropped to his knee before her, and kissed her hand. In a few moments Hepburn of Riccartoune arrived and joined them; with him came John Beaton, and every horse in the village of Kinross that could be secured. One had a side saddle for the Queen, who, panting with her sudden freedom, was quickly mounted; but nothing would induce her to move until she had seen her preserver, Little Willie, mounted also; of what became of the girl we know nothing.

They started on a wild mad ride at a stretch

[1] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 285.

gallop, the Queen stirrup to stirrup with George Douglas, the others following, horses straining with excitement and urged to speed. In a mile Lord Seton joined them with a party, who had been watching from a neighbouring hill for the boat to cross the Loch, and so on to the ferry, where they were met by Lord Claud Hamilton with fifty of his name. Once over the Firth, on again to Niddry Castle and comparative safety. She had made her freedom at last—for a fortnight!

At Niddry she rested, feeling heartened and secure; she sent out messengers in all directions—Riccartoune to Dunbar to receive the Castle which she concluded still to be held in her name, thence he was to go to Sweden and Denmark, seek out Bothwell and make him acquainted with the glorious news of her freedom.[1] Then to horse again, and another wild ride to Hamilton, where she knew her friends awaited her.

The news of her daring escape spread like lightning through the country, and many of the great nobles, even some of those who had so recently been banded against her, now hurried to her with protestations of their loyalty and homage. The Earls of Argyll, Cassillis, Eglinton and Rothes, Lords Somerville, Livingstone, Herries, Yester, Ross, Fleming, and Borthwick, all sought her out at Hamilton, and joined such forces as they could gather, with the Hamiltons, in her defence, and in a very few days she had an army of six thousand men at her command.[2]

The Queen next formed a Council, formally stated

[1] MS. letter, State Paper Office, Drury to Cecil, 9th May 1568.

[2] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 285.

that her demission of the Crown and assent to the coronation of her son as King, had been forced from her under threats and the fear of death had she refused, and, to his honour, Sir Robert Melvil boldly confirmed her statement.

Amidst shouts of joy, her Council declared all the Acts of the federated Lords to be null and void, and that the Queen was thereby restored to her Crown and Kingdom, and this deed was signed by every Baron and person of note who had rallied to the Royal Standard.

The Queen once more was on her throne!

CHAPTER XX

LANGSIDE AND FAREWELL

After her escape from Loch Leven, it was only the briefest relief that Queen Mary found in the three years of disillusionment and misery which had dogged her footsteps ever since her ill-fated marriage to Darnley. For a moment she was in the wonderful high spirits which seldom failed to revive at even a slight change in her fortunes for the better, and the present was no exception to the rule.

In Hamilton Parks she had an army of six thousand men, mostly feudal vassals and levies under their hereditary chieftains. The Hamiltons were, of course, in the greatest strength, as they were under their own commander, Lord Claud Hamilton, in their own country. The Earl of Argyll had a considerable force from Inveraray and Loch Fyne side, and there was a large body of Borderers under their own Barons, and such levies as it had been possible to get together at short notice.

At the time of her flight from Loch Leven, and on her arrival at Hamilton Palace, Moray was only eight miles away at Glasgow, where he was engaged on business of State, and with only his personal attendants and guard with him. His first intimation of Mary's escape was the receipt from her of a message,

couched in conciliatory terms, and offering her forgiveness for his unnatural conduct towards her; it suggested a conference with a view to arriving at some compromise which would meet the views of both parties, and would effect a reconciliation without bloodshed of the warring factions of the distracted country.

If we can forget the duplicity and ingratitude of the man, we cannot but admire his courage and the rapidity with which Moray acted under circumstances which threatened to wreck all his plans, and the position which he had built up for himself with such unscrupulous determination.

He found his supporters, in alarm for their heads, stealing away to join the Queen's forces, and others eager to advise him to retire to Edinburgh. He flatly refused to adopt a policy which would be construed into flight, and he therefore returned a pacific answer to the Queen, that he would take counsel with the nobles on the offers of compromise. In his turn he sent messengers to Stirling, to the Lothians and to Edinburgh, and when he had sure knowledge that considerable numbers under Morton and the other Lords intended making forced marches to Glasgow, were indeed already on their way, he issued a proclamation, as Regent of the Kingdom, in which he expressed his determination to uphold the King's Government at all costs, and commanded all loyal Scots subjects to rally to the support of his authority. Kirkaldy of Grange soon joined him with a formidable force of cavalry, and the Earl of Mar, the King's Governor, sent artillery from Stirling Castle. Lord Hume brought some six or seven hundred men, and in ten days Moray's

troops in Glasgow had swelled to four thousand men, with which to oppose the six thousand of the Queen at Hamilton.

Lord Fleming held Dumbarton Castle for the Queen, and thus Moray was between two fires. Had Mary had leaders with the military genius of Grange, or with the calculating brain of Hume, she certainly would have had an exceptional chance of success; but from the commencement of hostilities, her commanders seem to have been so ill-advised that opportunity after opportunity was thrown away, with a fatality which was in full accord with the Queen's unhappy fortunes.

This decision to link up with Lord Fleming at Dumbarton had much to commend it, and had they essayed the longer route on the north bank of the Clyde, and passed to the eastward of Moray's position, they might have had a better chance of success; but other counsels prevailed, and when Grange found the south bank selected, which would mean an ever-widening river between his enemy's two forces, he realised and seized his opportunity.

He crossed the Clyde in strength, debouched on the little village of Langside, and occupied every cottage kail-yard, and every stone wall which could be lined with his hackbutters, and so commanded either side of a narrow lane through which the Royalist troops must pass. Meanwhile a bridge-head farther down the river was held by Moray in person, with his main body.

The Queen now took up her station on Cathcart Knowe, a tiny hill half a mile to the south of the village of Langside; with her were Lord Herries, Lord Livingstone, Lord Fleming, and George and Little Willie Douglas,

a poor enough suite for the Queen of Scots! All her other principal leaders were in command of their vassals, and now marching to the attack; the entire Royalist force was under Lord Claud Hamilton and the Earl of Argyll.

The head of this army now entered the little lane previously referred to, which was enfiladed by the hackbutters in position behind the cottage walls, and as they advanced, these poured in a deadly fire at close range, which mowed down the leading ranks. Lord Claud Hamilton knew that he outnumbered his enemy by about three to two, and attempted to force the passage of the lane by sheer weight of numbers with two thousand men, but they were not good military material, composed as they were of small and disconnected units from various parts of the country, and they wavered visibly at the first fire from the hackbutters.

Moray's main body now moved forward, chiefly pikemen of considerable military training, and as these advanced Kirkaldy of Grange, described as the best soldier in Scotland, and to whom Moray wisely had left the supreme military command, ordered them in a ringing voice to keep their pikes shouldered until the enemy's charge commenced; so the latter, somewhat disordered by the fire of the hackbutters, found themselves fronted by an impenetrable hedge of levelled pikes, when they got to within striking distance of their foe.

A little body of moss-troopers tried to force a way, and advanced to the charge, stirrup clicking against stirrup in the narrowness of the lane, but their leader

died on a Merseman's pike. The small troop of horse, now leaderless, were thrown into confusion, and turning to fly, brought worse destruction upon their infantry supporters with whom the lane was packed, and with Moray's reserves now advancing, all order was lost, the battle became a rout, and the Royalist troops were soon in flight. Moray had the humanity to stop the pursuit as soon as he saw his enemy defeated, and only some three hundred of the Queen's troops were slain, whilst his own losses were negligible.

On Cathcart Knowe the Queen watched the opening phases of the battle with confidence, and her dismay can be readily imagined when she saw her picked troops, which had been led into the lane by Lord Claud Hamilton in person, return thence in less than half-an-hour, a broken and flying rabble. What had transpired in the interval could not clearly be seen until the horse moved forward in support, but their greater height gave indication of the progress of the battle, as man and horse were seen to go down, and disappear into the struggling welter of indistinguishable figures, which could only be partially seen, below the level of the hedges.

Mary's fertile mind again saw the indignities she had suffered after Carberry Hill, saw the dreary expanse of Loch Leven in winter time, and long years of imprisonment stretching away before her, as the best that she could hope for if she were captured, whilst, at the worst, an appalling prospect of the "fiery death" was the bitter alternative.

Just before the defeat of her troops became apparent, Lord Herries, who had hastened out from Dumbarton

to meet his Queen on having news of her advance, was directed to where the Royal Standard was fluttering in the breeze on Cathcart Knowe, the last time it was ever to be raised for the Queen of Scots!

He now seized her bridle; she was mounted on a swift Spanish jennet, and he on a fresh horse brought out from the Hamilton stables after his hurried ride thither from Dumbarton, and he turned both to the south.

In a few moments the Queen and her retinue were moving rapidly from the stricken field; on through the pleasant lanes, now green with spring foliage, on by the Black Loch, skirting Kilmarnock town and over the Muirkirk Hills to Sanquhar. First galloping, then at a gentle trot to breathe their horses, anon breaking into a sharp canter, until the valley of the Nith was reached, where an hour's rest was snatched, a few oatcakes eaten, and others crumbled and made into mash for the horses. Then on again, the Queen, with Lord Herries, Lord Livingstone, George Douglas and Little Willie, all that were left of the friends that had rallied round her at Hamilton. Save Herries all were fugitives far from home and kindred, and it must be long before any of them saw either again.

At length they reached Dumfries, fifty long miles from the battlefield, with foundered horses, and worn-out riders. They were in the Herries country and were comparatively safe, close to the waters of the Solway Firth, and within easy reach of Carlisle should the need arise for a retreat over the Border.

Mary, however, was still restless and dissatisfied, for the bustling little town on the Nith spoke too eloquently

to her of the Reformed religion to which she, not without cause, attributed so much of her ill-fortune and persecution. Herries, it is true, was both good Protestant and loyal subject, but he could scarcely be expected to realise how much her faith actuated the Queen's mind, or how greatly she feared the venom of his co-religionists, and how she was swayed by her feelings when she found herself entirely isolated from those of her own views.

His guarantee of her safety anywhere within his own broad lands did not content her; she felt that she must reach some more secluded spot, to consider her position and determine upon her course of action. Was there not some religious house in the near vicinity, despoiled and debased perhaps, in the late persecution of Romish establishments, but still somewhere where she would be in surroundings more familiar to her, and where she could rest awhile? Dundrennan Abbey was suggested—yes that was it! Let them go on there at once! So on again, another five miles up the little fertile valleys near to Kirkcudbright, until, late at night, they reached the Abbey, and she found the temporary sanctuary of which she stood in need.

The Queen's mood and dire distress were, however, too pressing to endure even this haven of rest for long. She could look out on the bright waters of the Firth to the Cumberland shores, bathed in May sunshine, and she remembered the many friendly messages from Elizabeth of England that she had received. Surely *there* she would find the peace and help she so sorely needed. She had written to her "good sister" immediately following her arrival at Dundrennan, but

so soon as the letter had gone she felt that she could not await the answer. She would risk the hazard and throw herself on the English Queen's hospitality and mercy, relying on the sympathy in her many troubles which had been so freely offered, and appeared so generously expressed.

So George Douglas was sent to enquire as to means to cross the narrow strip of sea, and soon a little fishing vessel was discovered at a tiny cove, since named "Port Mary," and there, with Lord Herries, George and Willie Douglas, and about a dozen other of her retainers who had ridden with her from Langside, she embarked.

An hour or two to sail across the gently heaving waters of the Firth, and the boat reached Workington, where George Douglas was the first to spring ashore, and, as he assisted her over the side of the little craft, his head bare and his face working with emotion, he spoke, as he thought, for England and England's Queen:

"Madam," he said, "welcome to Cumberland, to England and to safety!"

There my story of *Mary of Scotland* must end! George Douglas was not to know of the treachery and cruelty to which Mary Stuart was yet to be subjected in the land whither she had fled for sanctuary! He could know nothing of nearly twenty years of sorrow and misery that lay before her; nothing of a captive's despair, waiting in castle after castle to be restored to her throne, separated from every friend, from the son who was to abandon her entirely; and certainly he imagined nothing of the last dread scene of all at Fotheringay.

All that is another story, with which we are not now concerned. We leave Queen Mary in some doubt and anxiety, it is true, but with hope arising anew, as it had never entirely failed her, after a fourth escape from her rebellious nobles, and from the traitors who, if they could, would have condemned her to a shameful death in her native land.

The reader, whose sympathies, I hope, have been aroused by this story of Queen Mary's sufferings during her brief sojourn in the country of her birth, may perhaps be interested in a few words of reminder of the retribution which overtook her principal enemies in Scotland, who wrested her crown from her in 1567.

James Stuart, Earl of Moray, basest of base-born traitors, was proclaimed Regent of Scotland on 22nd August 1567. Queen Mary left her Kingdom on 16th May 1568, and on 24th January 1569/70 Moray was shot in the High Street of Linlithgow, by James Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, who had been taken prisoner at Langside, and deprived of his estates. Moray enjoyed regal power for two and a half years, or only one year and eight months after Mary's flight from Scotland.

Matthew Stewart, Earl of Lennox, father of Henry Darnley, and grandfather of the young King, after an interregnum of six months, was elected Regent on 12th July 1570, on the recommendation of Queen Elizabeth, but against the advice and strong protests of all Queen Mary's friends, especially the Earl of Huntly, Lord Fleming, Lord Herries, and Kirkaldy

of Grange, the last of whom had so signally defeated her at Langside, but on the death of Moray took up arms for her. Civil War at once broke out on the election, and Grange captured both Lennox and Morton at Stirling, on 3rd September 1571. The Earl of Mar, however, sallied out from the Castle and released them, but in the confusion that followed Captain Calder, a supporter of Lord Claud Hamilton and the Earl of Huntly, shot the Regent Lennox through the back. He was killed after a Regency of only fourteen months.

John Erskine, Earl of Mar, restored to his Earldom by Queen Mary, Hereditary Governor of Stirling Castle, and guardian of the young King, was elected Regent on the day following the death of Lennox, with Civil War still raging. His Regency was disgraced by the vile plot which he and the Earl of Morton entered into with Elizabeth's ministers, under which Queen Mary was to be returned, a prisoner, to Scotland, and to be there executed "within four hours." This dastardly scheme would undoubtedly have been carried into effect, but that the Regent was stricken with sudden illness. Of course poison was suspected and rumoured, and he died on 28th October 1572, just as the negotiations with Elizabeth had been concluded, after a Regency of only thirteen months.

James Douglas, Earl of Morton, made Chancellor of Scotland by Mary on her return from France, banished for his participation in the murder of David Rizzio, pardoned, and one of the principal accessories in the murder of Henry Darnley, was elected Regent

on 24th November 1572. This notorious man, apart from his many crimes against his Queen and benefactress, was responsible for other judicial murders, amongst his victims being his one-time comrade, Sir William Kirkaldy of Grange, whom he had executed after his defence of Edinburgh Castle for the Queen. William Maitland of Lethington was taken at the same time, and would have been executed with Grange, but died in prison. Most dastardly of all, Morton's personal friend, the Earl of Northumberland, who had entertained him royally during his exile in England, and who was himself a prisoner in Morton's hands in Scotland, was basely and literally sold by him to the Queen of England for personal gain. Elizabeth then had him executed. Morton, by these executions, defeated the Civil War in favour of Mary during the year 1573, after the capture of Edinburgh Castle. He resigned the Regency in January 1577/8, after having held the supreme power for five years.

The young King then took the Government of the country upon himself, and afterwards Morton was impeached by Captain James Stewart, of the murder of the King (Darnley); he was tried on 1st June 1581 and was executed for his crime.

The fate of Sir William Kirkaldy of Grange and William Maitland of Lethington has been mentioned above under the Regency of Morton, and this concludes the list of Queen Mary's most prominent and powerful enemies during her short reign in Scotland. Well indeed might it have been said of them, "Their sins shall find them out!"

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